

Town of Concord
Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA

November 21, 2024, at 6:30 PM

Town House, 22 Monument Sq., 2nd Fl. Select Board Conference Room

Notice of public meeting as required by M.G.L. Chpt.30A §18-28

HYBRID IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

Join the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88645672134?pwd=5A8LsjSMpq3qk5b0ohTANiV87ZaJdH.1>

Meeting ID: 886 4567 2134 Passcode: 379949 Dial in Toll-Free: 833-548-0282

Please be advised that this open meeting is being broadcast live via Zoom and MMN and recorded for playback online, video-on-demand viewing at <https://concordma.gov/2409/Government>. The listings of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours before said meeting, which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may be addressed. Items may be taken out of order and at times differ from those listed below. Other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. **Video or call will be muted upon joining meeting please use the "raise your hand" feature in the zoom meeting to ask to speak. ATTENDEES ARE REMINDED THAT BY ATTENDING THIS MEETING THAT YOU CONSENT TO YOUR LIKENESS AND AUDIO BEING USED AND REBROADCAST BY MMN.**

- 6:30 PM **1. Call to Order**
- 6:30 PM **2. Public Comment**
Public Comment is limited to up to 10 minutes, with no more than 2 minutes allocated to any one speaker. Public Comment is limited to items that are not on the agenda.
- 6:40 PM **3. Finance Committee's FY26 Guidelines**
 - Discuss and Vote on Preliminary FY26 Guidelines
- 7:40 PM **4. Finance Committee's Policies**
 - Discussion regarding Free Cash, Excessive Levy Capacity, and Other Policies
- 8:00 PM **5. Finance Committee's Report to Town Meeting for FY2026**
 - Discuss the Finance Committee's Report to Town Meeting for FY2026
- 8:05 PM **6. Liaison Report**
- 8:20 PM **7. Correspondence**
- 8:25 PM **8. Minutes**
 - Discuss and potentially approve the minutes from the October 24, 2024, regular and joint meeting with the Carlisle Finance Committee and November 7, 2024 regular meeting
- 8:30 PM **9. Recap of Action Items/ Adjournment**

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Next Meeting: Monday, December 16, 2024 @ 6:00 pm, Joint Meeting w/Select Board and School Committee
 Thursday, December 18, 2024 @ 6:30 pm, Regular Meeting



Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

November 21, 2024

1

Call to Order

Requested by: FC Chair

Action Sought: Open Meeting

Proposed Motion(s)

None anticipated.

Additional Information

Board Action

<i>Motion</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>	<i>Disposition</i>



Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

November 21, 2024

3

Finance Committee's FY26 Guidelines Process

Discuss and Vote on Preliminary FY26 Guidelines

Requested by: FC Chair

Action Sought: Seek Approval

Proposed Motion(s)

None anticipated.

Additional Information

Board Action

<i>Motion</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>	<i>Disposition</i>

Summary of Preliminary Guidelines Scenarios ****draft****

\$ in millions			FY26 preliminary guidelines versus FY25 approved, \$ difference in millions							FY26 preliminary guidelines versus FY25 approved, % difference					
			Unused Levy Capacity Consumed	CPS not including MS Savings	Middle School Savings	CPS Net	CCRSD	Town	Total spending subject to guidelines	CPS not including MS Savings	Middle School Savings	CPS Net	CCRSD	Town	Total spending subject to guidelines
Scenario	Description														
Largest tax and levy capacity impact	1	Give the operating units the amount from the FY26 forecast they provided in October.	\$ 1.16	\$ 1.86	\$ (0.5)	\$ 1.36	\$ 1.02	\$ 1.28	\$ 3.66	3.99%	N/A	2.92%	4.42%	3.90%	3.57%
	2a	Apply preliminary guidelines target to underlying operating costs only, i.e., treat the following items separately -- Middle School Savings, OOD tuition increases, CCRSD Tier 1	\$ 0.96	\$ 1.75	\$ (0.5)	\$ 1.25	\$ 1.10	\$ 1.11	\$ 3.47	3.76%	N/A	2.69%	4.76%	3.40%	3.38%
	2b	Same as Scenario 2a but take back the extra CCRSD allocation. In Scenario 2a, we allocate \$78K more to CCRSD than they forecasted. In Scenario 2b, we "take that back" so that allocation = forecast.	\$ 0.91	\$ 1.75	\$ (0.5)	\$ 1.25	\$ 1.02	\$ 1.11	\$ 3.39	3.76%	N/A	2.69%	4.42%	3.40%	3.31%
Smallest tax and levy capacity impact	3	Target guidelines that hold excess levy capacity constant at 3.30% from FY25 to FY26. Similar to Scenarios 2a and 2b, apply preliminary guidelines target to underlying operating costs only, i.e., treat the following items separately -- Middle School Savings, OOD tuition increases, CCRSD Tier 1.	\$ -	\$ 1.31	\$ (0.5)	\$ 0.81	\$ 0.89	\$ 0.80	\$ 2.50	2.82%	N/A	1.74%	3.82%	2.45%	2.44%



Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

November 21, 2024

4

Financial Policies

Discussion regarding Free Cash, Excess Levy Capacity, and other Financial Policies

Requested by: FC Chair

Action Sought: Seek Approval

Proposed Motion(s)

None anticipated.

Additional Information

Board Action

<i>Motion</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>	<i>Disposition</i>



Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

November 21, 2024

5

2024 Annual Town Meeting

Discuss the FY26 Finance Committee Report

Requested by: FC Chair

Action Sought: Recommendation

Proposed Motion(s)

Discussion Dependent

Additional Information

Board Action

<i>Motion</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>	<i>Disposition</i>

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Town House
Concord, MA 01742

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TOWN OF CONCORD FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025



Town House - Concord, Massachusetts 1875

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NOTE: Many thanks to the staff of the Concord Main Public Library, Special Collections Department for their suggestions and assistance as well as their permission for the use of all photographs presented in the Finance Committee Annual Report.

Space for Notes

To the residents of Concord:

On behalf of all the members of the Finance Committee, I present you with this annual report, prepared by the Committee with the assistance of the Town Finance Department. The report summarizes the current financial position of the Town, advises residents as to the financial implications of short-term and longer-term actions under consideration, and makes specific recommendations on warrant articles with financial implications that are being considered at the 2024 Annual Town Meeting. It is the product of many hours of meetings, discussions and public hearings and incorporates input from other Town committees, from various Town departments and from the public. The members of the Committee are grateful for the cooperation and support they have received in doing the work that has culminated in the completion of this report.

Concordians should be concerned about the Town's current financial position. Our continued reliance on property taxes places the burden of higher costs on residents and property owners. For the five-year period FY2018-2023, total Town and School operating, capital, and debt service spending has increased (on average) 3.0% per year while non-property tax revenue increased only 2.4% per year, with the burden falling on Concord residents because 93% of our tax base are residential properties.

Unless Concordians and our elected leaders make substantial changes, this trend will continue. Total expenses for operating, capital, and debt service are expected to increase (on average) 4.2% per year for the five-year period FY2024-2029, while non-property tax revenues are projected to increase 2.9% per year. Any differences between expenses and non-property tax revenues will again have to be made up by property tax increases.

Notably, these projected increases do not incorporate the impact of several major projects that may have to be undertaken in the coming years. Some of those may create opportunities to broaden our tax base and increase future revenues, however some also would require substantial expenditures:

- The Town Manager has noted over the past several years that several critical Town facilities, such as the public safety building on Walden Street and the public works campus on Keyes Road, are reaching or have exceeded their useful lives and must be replaced or renovated, with total estimated capital costs of \$75 million or more for the town depending on the alternatives chosen.
- The Town Manager has recently shared that road maintenance faces a significant backlog, and catching up will necessitate substantial capital expenditures (\$4 million per year) over the next several years.
- The 2229 Main Street Advisory Task Force is in the process of recommending whether the Town should acquire the Superfund property at 2229 Main Street. Acquiring and developing the property could require substantial spending by the Town that may or may not yield ongoing town revenue, depending on how the site ends up being used.

- MCI-Concord's pending closure presents Concord with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for development and has already led some residents to call for a variety of uses. However, repurposing the property will require substantial investment, either by the Town or other entities and, depending on the uses, may or may not yield ongoing town revenue.

Integrating the costs of these and other investments into Town budgets while minimizing the impact on residential property taxes will require considerable effort and fundamental changes on the part of town and school leaders, various Boards and Committees, the Select Board, School Committee, and perhaps most importantly residents.

Residents will also be paying more through user fees. Examples include Articles 16 and 17 in this year's Warrant. Taken together with the increase in property taxes, these and other user fees likely will substantially raise the cost of living in Concord for the foreseeable future.

The Town Manager and Select Board must develop and execute a strategic planning process that prioritizes competing demands for town resources. All boards and committees should assess the financial impacts of their recommendations and actions. **The Superintendent and School Committee must develop strategies that moderate spending growth (spending for schools account for about two-thirds of all town spending) while improving outcomes for students.** The Select Board and School Committee should create an integrated capital plan that enables long-term planning and manages capital expenses for Town and School capital spending.

Most importantly, **we must make difficult choices.** What are our expectations for student outcomes relative to our spending on schools? Should Concord be an affordable place to live for individuals and families of moderate income? What are our expectations for good roads and quickly clearing snow after major storms? How much more property should the town purchase for open space (at the expense of potential development to broaden the tax base)? Should we encourage more development of retail and commercial use versus affordable housing? How would we prefer 2229 Main Street be used? What about the MCI-Concord property? Would we be comfortable with the property tax burden increasing 4-6% or more per year for the next five years for residential properties? Do we want to broaden our tax base?

How we, our town and school leaders, and elected officials answer these questions will determine the shape, character, and values of our Town. I urge every citizen of Concord to make their voices heard through participation at various committee and board meetings and most importantly by voting in town elections and actively participating in annual Town Meetings. Only by doing so can we make a difference and help ensure that Concord continues to be the type of town we can proudly call home.

Sincerely,
Parashar Patel, Chair
Concord Finance Committee

REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Introduction

The Concord Finance Committee is pleased to present this annual report for Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25). The Finance Committee is made up of 15 members, appointed by the Town Moderator for staggered three-year terms. The roles and responsibilities of the Committee are defined by town by-laws and past votes of Town Meeting. The Committee establishes fiscal guidelines for the Town Manager, the Concord Public School (CPS) Committee and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School (CCRS) Committee to use in preparing their operating budgets.

Approximately 80% of the Town and School’s overall spending is covered by the guidelines; the remaining 20% and the budgets of the Town’s enterprise funds (utilities and the Beede Center) are not covered by the guidelines set by the Committee. Such fiscal guidelines are developed by having conversations during the Committee’s public meetings with each budgeting entity to understand its current requirements and future anticipated needs. The Committee conducts public hearings on finance-related warrant articles in advance of Town Meeting, getting input from the public to aid in preparing its recommendations on those proposals.

To help the Committee fulfill its responsibility of financial oversight and gain an understanding of the potential financial impact of initiatives under consideration by other Town boards and committees, each member of the Committee is assigned to act as an observer of one or more of the other Town boards and committees, attending public meetings of those Town boards and committees and reporting back to the full Finance Committee. The Committee is also charged with managing the Town’s Reserve Fund and votes on requests from the Town Manager to disburse money from that fund to address unforeseen or extraordinary events.

The Committee also prepares this annual report, distributed each year in advance of the Annual Town Meeting, setting out the Committee’s recommendations on all finance-related warrant articles and including a 5-year projection of what the total tax burden is likely to be on the citizens of the Town. It performs these duties in accordance with the Town’s Fiscal Policies and with the objective of maintaining and strengthening the long-term financial health of the Town within a level of property taxation that is sustainable and supportable by the residents.

The members of the Finance Committee (listed below, with the date that each member’s term will expire) would like to express our thanks to the Town Manager and Town Finance Department for their invaluable help in the preparation of this report.

<i>Name</i>			<i>Term (number indicates 1st or 2nd Term and end year of Term)</i>		
Parashar Patel, Chair (2024) - 2	John Garofalo (2025) - 1	Dee Ortner (2025) - 2			
Margaret Briggs (2024) - 1	Greg Guarriello (2025) - 2	Karlen Reed (2027) - 1			
Suresh Bhatia (2025) - 1	Amrith Kumar (2026) - 1	Christine Reynolds (2024) - 2			
Kathy Cuocolo (2026) - 2	Don Kupka (2026) - 1	Quazi Sadruzzaman (2027)- 1			
Eric Dahlberg (2024) - 1	Lyndsey Lis (2025) - 1	Lois Wasoff (2026) - 2			

Finance Committee Responsibilities

The Concord Finance Committee was established by Town bylaw in 1921. By tradition, members serve no more than two terms. By this arrangement, there is always a mix of new and experienced members and a mix of new points of view and institutional memory. Because the members are appointed by the Moderator, the Finance Committee is independent of the Town's administrative structure and elected boards.

The Finance Committee has the following responsibilities:

- Establishing fiscal guidelines for the three major budgeting entities in the Town (the Town Manager, the Concord Public School Committee, and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee) in preparing their budgets. The Town's enterprise fund budgets (i.e., the Town Light Plant and the Beede Center) are not part of the guidelines process.
- Conducting public hearings on the budgets and other financial matters expected to come before annual and special Town Meetings.
- Preparing this report for distribution to all residents before the Annual Town Meeting, including recommendations on finance-related warrant articles and a summary of the Town's financial status.
- Managing a Reserve Fund account to meet extraordinary and unforeseen expenditures (proposed at \$200,000 for FY25).

It is important to emphasize that the role of the Finance Committee is limited to making recommendations. The Finance Committee regularly makes recommendations to Town Meeting, the Town Manager, the Select Board, the school committees, the Superintendent of Schools, other boards and committees, and the citizens of the Town. Responsibility for making decisions is reserved to the citizens through Town Meeting and Town elections and to staff members, boards, and committees to whom specific responsibilities have been delegated by Town by-law and/or State Law.

Trends and Anticipated Challenges

The Committee has identified certain trends that may over time have an impact on the financial well-being of the Town and its residents, including:

- Our 5-year projection (discussed in more detail below) indicates the median tax bill will increase 12.5% from FY25 through FY29. Budgets presented herein result in a 4.1% increase, and the issuance of additional debt for the middle school pursuant to previously citizen-approved borrowing authorizations adds the remaining increase.
- Each of the Town's three budgeting entities is anticipating budget increases going forward ranging from 3% to 5%, thus outpacing projected revenue growth. (See projections below.) Although it has been possible to stay within the levy limit for FY25, unless the Town and Schools can find additional sources of revenue and/or are willing to reduce cost growth, the Committee estimates that Proposition 2-1/2 overrides to fund operating expenses may be necessary, perhaps as soon as FY27 or FY28.
- The Town is faced with aging infrastructure and several important Town facilities (such as the public safety and public works buildings) are either near the end of their useful lives or require substantial improvement and modernization. Important projects like road repair and maintenance are being deferred. The amounts typically set aside for capital projects are not sufficient to cover the identified needs, which become more urgent as they are further delayed. In addition, new and costly projects associated with enterprise funds cannot be overlooked.
- Remaining funds from federal programs designed to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, such as the Elementary and School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), will be utilized or obligated by December 31, 2024. Once fully spent, any recurring costs will have to be covered with Town or School funds.
- The Town has historically been able to maintain its Free Cash* balance at the higher end of the 5-10% level that is required by Town policy and helps to maintain Concord's Aaa bond rating. For FY25, Free Cash is projected to be at or very slightly above the 5% floor. Therefore, the Finance Committee voted on March 28th, 2024, to not allocate any free cash towards reducing the tax levy.
- The increasing property tax burden may become possibly unsustainable for members of our community and may well influence decision-making of potential future residents. As a consequence, living in Concord may become less attractive and/or impossible for people of relatively modest means.

* Free cash refers to the amount of Fund Balance that is available for appropriation. It is certified each July 1 by the state.

Forecasted Revenue and Expenses

Over the Fall and Winter months the Town, CPS, and CCRSD developed and shared five-year trends for revenue and cost projections at Finance Committee meetings. Since then, the Town has updated its five-year projections and the tables below reflect that update as of March 2024.

Revenue is expected to increase at a +3.33% pace from \$122.7 million in FY24 to \$144.5 million in FY29. This includes a 3.27% increase in FY25.

Revenue:

General Fund Revenue Summary	Budget FY24	Projected FY25	Projected FY26	Projected FY27	Projected FY28	Projected FY29	2024-2029 CAGR
Total Property Taxes (inside levy)	\$ 102,498,215	\$ 106,023,521	\$ 109,635,659	\$ 113,336,755	\$ 117,128,985	\$ 121,014,580	3.38%
State Aid	\$ 6,476,811	\$ 6,668,944	\$ 6,835,668	\$ 7,006,559	\$ 7,181,723	\$ 7,361,266	2.59%
Local Receipts	\$ 9,132,760	\$ 9,312,497	\$ 9,622,859	\$ 9,944,551	\$ 10,277,994	\$ 10,623,624	3.07%
Transfers/Other	\$ 4,615,758	\$ 4,732,852	\$ 4,920,603	\$ 5,115,836	\$ 5,318,850	\$ 5,529,956	3.68%
TOTAL	\$ 122,723,544	\$ 126,737,814	\$ 131,014,788	\$ 135,403,701	\$ 139,907,552	\$ 144,529,427	3.33%
Growth Rates		3.27%	3.37%	3.35%	3.33%	3.30%	

Totals may not add because of rounding. CAGR stands for compound annual growth rate.

Concurrently, costs are expected to increase from \$128.1 million in FY24 to \$153.4 million in FY29, a growth rate of 3.67% which exceeds the projected 3.33% growth in revenue. Debt service cost for “excluded debt” will add an additional \$7.5 million for FY24 to \$13.6 million in FY29.

Expenses:

General Fund Expense Summary	Budget FY24	Projected FY25	Projected FY26	Projected FY27	Projected FY28	Projected FY29	2024-2029 CAGR
Joint Cost (inside levy)	\$ 22,173,759	\$ 22,845,891	\$ 24,984,234	\$ 26,457,800	\$ 28,298,964	\$ 29,587,359	5.96%
Town Spending	\$ 33,977,234	\$ 35,125,639	\$ 36,500,551	\$ 37,909,471	\$ 39,376,654	\$ 40,901,122	3.78%
CPS Spending	\$ 45,009,676	\$ 46,515,714	\$ 47,911,185	\$ 49,348,521	\$ 50,828,977	\$ 52,353,846	3.07%
CCRSD Spending	\$ 25,357,846	\$ 26,140,908	\$ 26,663,726	\$ 27,197,001	\$ 27,740,941	\$ 28,295,760	2.22%
Minuteman Spending	\$ 1,641,695	\$ 1,756,614	\$ 1,879,577	\$ 2,011,147	\$ 2,151,927	\$ 2,302,562	7.00%
TOTAL	\$ 128,160,210	\$ 132,384,766	\$ 137,939,273	\$ 142,923,941	\$ 148,397,462	\$ 153,440,649	3.67%
Growth Rates		3.30%	4.20%	3.61%	3.83%	3.40%	

Totals may not add because of rounding.

Absent changes in cost growth, Concord will need an additional \$3million in FY25 down to \$1.0 million per year in FY29 of excess levy capacity to maintain our current fiscal situation before potentially needing a proposition 2.5% override for continuing operations.

Over the next several years the Finance Committee recommends more vigorous fiscal restraint as the Town’s revenue and Free Cash fully recover and while the taxpayers absorb the increase in taxes related to the new Middle School. We urge (and rely on) Town and School leaders to recommend sustainable revenue growth by all means available to them in upcoming years.

Concord's Budgeting Approach

Concord has traditionally taken a conservative approach to budgeting. The Finance Committee seeks to maintain operating cost increases within certain criteria to meet a goal of financial sustainability over the long term. In addition, it is important for the Town to maintain flexibility in dealing with future infrastructure needs, unanticipated expenses, other contingencies, and variations in revenue. These criteria include:

- Setting modest expectations for revenue growth, with estimates of property tax growth from new construction and renovations based only on known development activity for which there is a high likelihood of completion in the upcoming fiscal year.
- Keeping tax increases from depleting excess levy limit capacity so that general overrides are not required.
- Maintaining the uncommitted General Fund Balance ("Free Cash") at levels at between 5% and 10% of the subsequent year's total Town Budget.
- Supporting capital needs by routinely dedicating 7-8% of total budget resources for capital improvements--
 - roughly 1/3rd of capital financing is derived from current resources and 2/3rd is derived from debt financing through the issuance of long-term bonds,
 - principal repayment is structured so that most (60%) bonded debt is retired within five years, and 90% is retired within 10 years; and
 - Taxpayers are not burdened beyond what typical expectations of income growth can accommodate.

The Town's Free Cash position and debt policies are key factors in maintaining the Town's credit rating of Aaa, which it has held since 1987.

Five Year Projections of Real Estate Taxes

In the fall of each year, the Select Board (with the advice from the Board of Assessors) holds a Tax Classification Public Hearing, considers factors, and then votes to set the tax rate for the fiscal year underway. For those that receive quarterly tax bills, the two from the fall are estimated and the two from the following spring reconcile those estimates with what the Select Board has voted.

Below is a five-year projection of property taxes for an approximate median assessed value home of \$1,303,250. These projections are based on the assumptions that where possible Concord will:

- a) continue its past practice of raising taxes in an amount less than the full 2-1/2% permitted by Massachusetts law under Proposition 2-1/2;
- b) use the full permitted 2-1/2% levy amount when and if necessary to meet increased expenses and needs;
- c) incur no additional “excluded debt” (that is, debts that are separately authorized at Town Meeting and the ballot box the repayment of which is outside the levy limit) other than the Middle School and other excluded debt that has already been authorized; and
- d) not otherwise have to address substantial unforeseen or anticipated events that significantly increase costs or decrease revenues.

Any of these assumptions could be proven incorrect and, if that happens, there could be a profound impact on these projections.

TABLE

	Projected FY25	Projected FY26	Projected FY27	Projected FY28	Projected FY29
Median Tax Bill (est.)	\$ 17,587	\$ 18,929	\$ 20,569	\$ 22,242	\$ 23,749
Regular levy increase	\$ 440	\$ 473	\$ 514	\$ 556	\$ 594
Additional tax levy used	\$ 324	\$ 223	\$ 153	\$ 53	\$ 16
Existing Excluded Debt change	\$ (67)	\$ (149)	\$ (101)	\$ (28)	\$ (26)
Middle School debt	\$ 645	\$ 1,094	\$ 1,107	\$ 927	\$ 862
Median Tax Bill change	\$ 1,341	\$ 1,640	\$ 1,673	\$ 1,507	\$ 1,445
	7.63%	8.67%	8.13%	6.78%	6.08%
next year tax bill	\$ 18,929	\$ 20,569	\$ 22,242	\$ 23,749	\$ 25,194

NOTE: At Town Meeting, a handout (on the tables) that estimates the impact of Town Meeting spending decisions on your tax bill will be available.

Finance Committee Guidelines for FY25

Each year, the Finance Committee publishes a budget guideline for each of our Town's three primary budgeting entities: Town Government, the Concord Public Schools, and Concord's portion of the Concord Carlisle Regional High School. The guideline covers approximately 80% of operating spending for the Town, CPS, and CCRSD. **Spending for items such as debt service, Town and CPS non-teacher employee benefits and retirement, liability insurance, etc. are not included in the guideline process.*

The guideline specifies the amount of the increase over the prior year's "spending subject to guidelines" available to each unit for the next fiscal year. The process of preparing the guideline begins by considering several factors to gauge the regional financial environment, which include general inflation, tax collection rates for the Town, and estimates of state aid for the upcoming fiscal year. The Committee's goal is to set the guidelines that allows the town to:

- Maintain level service for Town and Schools, recognizing cost growth.
- Keep a level of excess levy limit capacity to avoid general overrides.
- Maintain a sufficient Free Cash balance.
- Continue investing in ongoing capital needs.
- Avoid burdening taxpayers beyond normal expectations of income growth or undermining the diversity of our population.
- Maintain its character, including economic diversity of residents.

The Finance Committee begins the process by setting a metric for determining the rate of anticipated spending growth. For this fiscal year, the Committee looked at data developed by the Congressional Budget Office to define the metrics against which spending increases must be considered and determined that for fiscal year 2025

- projected inflation (for goods and services relevant to budgeting entities) is 3.66%;
- projected nominal personal income growth per capita is 3.35%; and
- projected real personal income growth per capita (net of inflation) is 1%.

After the Committee received input from the Town and the Schools about their anticipated needs in FY25, the **final guidelines for increases in spending by the Town, CPS and CCRSD included 3.26% total year-over-year increase in spending subject to guidelines**. Specific increases included: 4.45% for the Town (which includes 3.26% for the operating budget plus 26.38% for Tier 1 Capital expenses), 3.26% for CPS operating budget and 3.26% for CCRSD operating budget.

The Finance Committee arrived at the Final Guidelines by considering several factors noting that 3.66% is the highest rate of the metrics established by the Committee to inform overall increases for spending subject to guidelines.

- **All three operating units were provided with the same 3.26% increase for spending subject to guidelines.** Unlike recent years, there was no “catch up” needed for any operating unit over the others. (The situation for the Town Tier 1 Capital spending was different as explained below.)
- **Town spending** subject to guidelines should increase from \$31,711,833 to **\$32,745,639.**
- **CPS spending** subject to guidelines should increase from \$45,047,176 to **\$46,515,715.**
- **CCRSD spending** subject to guidelines should increase from \$22,302,834 to **\$23,029,906.**

Spending Subject to Guidelines

Spending Subject to Guidelines	Budget FY24	Projected FY25	Projected FY26	Projected FY27	Projected FY28	Projected FY29	2024-2029 CAGR
Town Spending	\$ 33,977,234	\$ 35,125,639	\$ 36,500,551	\$ 37,909,471	\$ 39,376,654	\$ 40,901,122	3.78%
<i>Growth Rates</i>		3.38%	3.91%	3.86%	3.87%	3.87%	
CPS Spending	\$ 45,047,176	\$ 46,515,714	\$ 47,911,185	\$ 49,348,521	\$ 50,828,977	\$ 52,353,846	3.05%
<i>Growth Rates</i>		3.26%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	
CCRSD Spending	\$ 25,357,846	\$ 26,140,908	\$ 26,663,726	\$ 27,197,001	\$ 27,740,941	\$ 28,295,760	2.22%
<i>Growth Rates</i>		3.09%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	
Total Growth	\$ 104,382,256	\$ 107,782,261	\$ 111,075,462	\$ 114,454,993	\$ 117,946,571	\$ 121,550,728	3.36%
<i>Growth Rates</i>		3.26%	3.06%	3.04%	3.05%	3.06%	

NOTE: In considering the increase in Town Tier 1 Capital, the Finance Committee took into consideration that Tier 1 Capital is included in the Town spending subject to guidelines. For the Schools, there is a separate warrant article for Tier 1 Capital, which in previous years typically totaled approximately \$900,000, and was not subject to guidelines. The School’s Tier 1 Capital request for FY25 is for \$446,000.

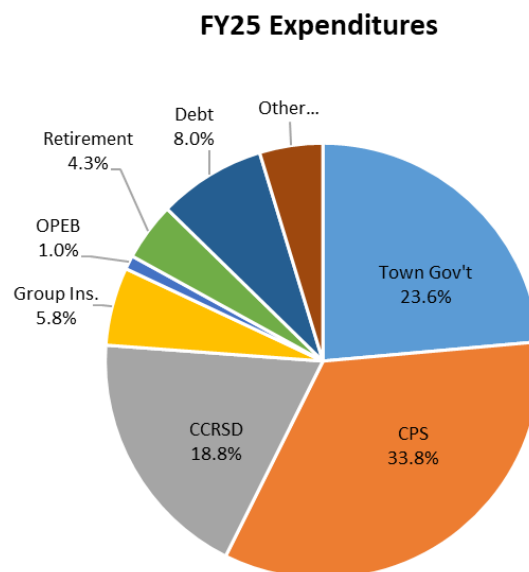
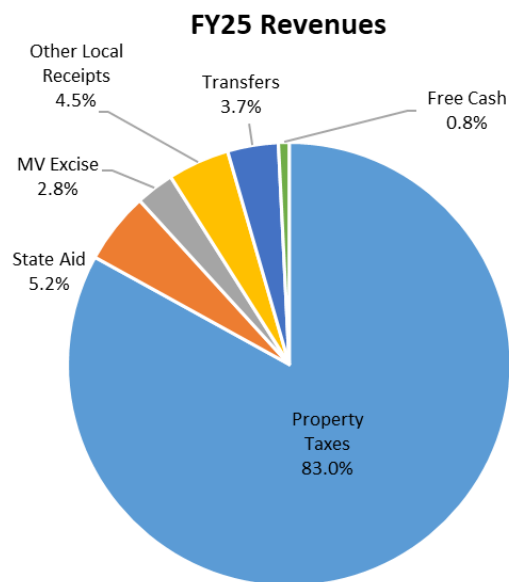
Based on the latest information available regarding revenue, an overall increase of 3.26% in guideline spending for the Town and Schools would result in a 3.26% increase in taxes for the median homeowner. This is in addition to an expected increase in taxes of up to 4% due to the borrowing to finance the building of the Middle School, depending on the final terms on which the remaining bond authorization is financed.

Budget Highlights

Eighty-three percent (83%) of the budget is supported by property tax collection. The remaining amount is supported by State Aid, Local Receipts and other Available Funds (i.e. contributions from Enterprise Funds and Free Cash).

- The median single family residential tax bill in FY24 was \$15,935 based on an assessed value of \$1,169,500 at a tax rate of \$13.13 per thousand. The projected increase on the median single-family residential tax bill for FY25 is \$16,454.48.
- Debt Service expense is projected to be 3.79% of the total general fund budget.
- The town is committed to funding long-term liabilities (Concord Retirement System and Other Post-Employment Benefits). Health care costs and associated health care premiums have risen higher than inflation and the FY25 Group Insurance cost is projected to decrease by \$140,471.
- Free cash as of July 1, 2023 is anticipated to be certified at \$8.5 million which is 6.4% of the total general budget fund. Proposed allocations for consideration at the 2024 Annual Town include: \$76,870.49 (Article 12), \$350,000 (Article 13), \$11,715.71 (Article 52).

Sources and Uses



Conclusion

The Town and School finances continue to be well managed, as evidenced by the long-standing Aaa bond ratings of the Town and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School District, and the ability to meet the growing demand for high quality public services. As such, the Finance Committee believes the FY25 budget is a sound estimate of spending to maintain currently available services.

More challenges lie ahead. In addition to the debt service for completion of the new middle school building project, we also anticipate other, multi-million dollar building projects for critical Town facilities and infrastructure needs within the next 3-12 years – all while operating costs are expected to exceed projected revenues. The willingness to meet current and upcoming challenges that work for our entire community depends on our Town government officials, School leadership teams and also *all of us!*

The Finance Committee expresses its grateful appreciation to those leaders, including Town Manager Kerry Lafleur, Chief Financial Officer Anthony M. Ansaldi, Jr., Assistant Chief Financial Officer Elizabeth Rourke, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Laurie Hunter, School CFO Robert Conry and their respective staffs, for their leadership and continuous perseverance in balancing resources and priorities that meet our community needs and financial limitations. We look forward to working with them in the upcoming years.

THE PROPOSED BUDGET APPROPRIATION FOR THE YEAR JULY 1, 2024 (FY25)

The Proposed Budget Appropriation for the year beginning July 1, 2024 (FY25)

	FY25: Warrant location reference	Appropriated FY24	Proposed FY25	percent change	percent of total
Town Government					
General Government	Art. 8, item 1	\$ 4,913,601	\$ 5,602,619	14.02%	4.03%
Legal Services	Art. 8, item 2	450,000	400,000	-11.11%	0.29%
Finance	Art. 8, item 3	2,473,813	2,599,727	5.09%	1.87%
Planning & Land Management	Art. 8, item 4	2,505,856	2,628,721	4.90%	1.89%
Human Services, including Library	Art. 8, item 5	3,451,331	3,488,951	1.09%	2.51%
Public Safety (Police & Fire)	Art. 8, item 6	11,928,437	12,106,896	1.50%	8.72%
Public Works	Art. 8, item 7	4,958,795	5,112,219	3.09%	3.68%
Unclassified	Art. 8, item 8	75,000	25,000	-66.67%	0.02%
Reserve Fund	Art. 8, item 9	200,000	200,000	0.00%	0.14%
Salary Reserve	Art. 8, item 10	755,000	581,506	-22.98%	0.42%
	Subtotal, Town Gov't	\$ 31,711,833	\$ 32,745,639	3.26%	23.58%
Employee Benefits (Town & CPS only)					
Group Insurance	Art. 8, item 12A	\$ 8,140,471	\$ 8,000,000	-1.73%	5.76%
Retirement (pension funding)	Art. 8, item 13A&B	5,049,675	5,999,746	18.81%	4.32%
Social Security & Medicare	Art. 8, item 12E	989,168	1,028,735	4.00%	0.74%
	Total Employee Benefits	\$ 14,179,314	\$ 15,028,481	5.99%	10.82%
Town & School (CPS) debt service					
debt repayment within levy limit		\$ 4,527,700	\$ 4,453,350	-1.64%	3.21%
debt excluded from levy limit		3,909,764	6,590,674	68.57%	4.75%
	Total Tax-Supported	8,437,464	11,044,024	30.89%	7.95%
	total debt service	\$ 8,437,464	\$ 11,044,024		
Property & Liability Insurance					
	Art. 8, item 12B	406,350	539,412	32.75%	0.39%
Unemployment/Workers Comp	Art. 8, item 12C & D	301,818	316,909	5.00%	0.23%
	Article 8, total:	55,036,779	59,674,465	8.43%	42.98%
OPEB Trust, General Fund					
	Art. 10	1,364,609	1,467,851	7.57%	1.07%
Capital Outlay, Cash					
	Art. 9	1,725,000	2,180,000	26.38%	1.58%
Minuteman Tech Regional HS					
Minuteman Tech Regional HS- debt		\$ 1,154,162	\$ 1,199,223	3.90%	0.87%
		488,844	533,583	9.15%	0.39%
	Art. 19	1,643,006	1,732,806	5.47%	1.26%
Concord Public Schools (CPS)					
	Art. 23	\$ 45,047,176	\$ 46,515,714	3.26%	33.78%
Concord-Carlisle Regional HS (Concord's assessment share)					
	Operations	\$ 22,302,834	\$ 23,150,489	3.80%	16.67%
	Debt Service	3,055,012	2,990,419	-2.11%	2.15%
	Art. 20	\$ 25,357,846	\$ 26,140,908		
Other Articles		4,500	4,500	0.00%	0.003%
	TOTAL Town Meeting appropriations	\$ 130,178,916	\$ 137,716,244		
NOT Appropriated:					
State Assessments (mostly for MBTA)		\$ 653,482	\$ 641,131	-1.89%	0.46%
Snow & Ice expense account deficit		-	-		
Overlay for tax exemptions and abatements		740,487	500,000	-32.48%	0.36%
		\$ 1,393,969	\$ 1,141,131		
TOTAL SPENDING PLAN		\$ 131,572,885	\$ 138,857,375	5.54%	

FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS ON FINANCE RELATED ARTICLES

Article	Recommendation and Reason
3 - Meeting Procedure	The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. This article is sponsored by the Finance Committee to ensure that all articles and amendments moved by town meeting identify a source of funding and comply with the requirements of Proposition 2 ½.
7 – Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Line-Item Adjustments	The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. This article enables funds from one line item to be transferred to another line item within the Town Manager’s budget, i.e., it moves money from line items that underspent to line items that overspent during FY24. It does not authorize the spending of any unappropriated funds; nor does it seek appropriation of incremental funds. The Finance Committee believes this is a housekeeping article that allows the Finance Director to pay bills or expenses already incurred or anticipated to be incurred prior to June 30th.
8 – Fiscal Year 2025 Town Budget	The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. The Town met the Finance Committee’s FY25 guideline for spending.
9 – Capital Improvement & Debt Plan	The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. The funding requests for Tier 1 (capital outlay) of \$2,180,000 and Tier 2 (borrowed funds) of \$4,100,000 will be funded within the existing Levy limit.
10 – OPEB Trust Fund Appropriation	The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. Best practice is for the transfer of funds from the General Fund (\$1,401,347), the Light Plant (\$50,761) and the Broadband Fund (\$15,743).
11 – OPEB Trust Fund Expense	The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action . The Town appropriates the expenses of the OPEB Trust Fund (\$1,467,851) and pays them directly rather than deducting those expenses from investment earnings.
12 – Appropriation to the Opioid Prevention Programs Fund	The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. This article permits the transfer from Certified Free Cash as of July 1, 2023, the sum of \$76,870.49 (unspent opioid settlement funds), or any other sum, to the Opioid Prevention Programs special revenue fund, or take any other action relative thereto. To date, the Town has received approximately \$90,791.00 in opioid settlement funds as of December 31, 2023. Based upon guidance from the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office, the Town expects to receive an approximate total of \$661,463 through calendar year 2038.

<p>13 – Public Safety for the Concord250 Celebrations in 2025</p>	<p>The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. The Town anticipates that this major public event commemorating the beginning of the American Revolution will bring more visitors and vehicles to Concord than normally expected. As such, additional resources (\$350,000) will be required to manage public safety concerns. If approved, Article 13 will be funded from Free Cash.</p>
<p>14 – Use of Free Cash</p>	<p>The Finance Committee has voted not to move this article. The Committee annually reviews the Free Cash policy and has reaffirmed the commitment to keep the unused Free Cash Balance in a range of 5% to 10% of the total ensuing budget, a level deemed essential to enable the Town to cope with unexpected circumstances. Further, adequate Free Cash is an important factor in the maintenance of the Town’s Aaa credit rating. The Town’s Free Cash level currently is near the lower end of this range. If approved, Article 13 would be funded from Free Cash. In years when the Free Cash balance is toward the higher end of the range, the Finance Committee has recommended the allocation of some funds to reduce the tax levy. The Finance Committee does not feel that such an allocation this year is prudent.</p>
<p>15 – Establish a Permanent Senior Means Tested Property Tax Exemption</p>	<p>The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. The act originally authorizing this exemption expired. To continue this tax exemption into perpetuity, the Town must vote to accept Chapter 193 of the Acts of 2022. If the Town votes to accept Chapter 193 of the Acts of 2022, the Senior Means Tested Property Tax Exemption will be permanent for qualifying Town residents.</p>
<p>16 – Create Stormwater Enterprise Fund</p>	<p>The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. This article authorizes the Town to create a fund to account for the revenues and expenditures of all infrastructure, operations and activities for Stormwater Management. If the Town adopts the proposed bylaw, the Public Works Commission will develop a presentation for next year’s Town Meeting that outlines a budget and a program of user fees to be paid by all properties with impervious surfaces to cover the costs of stormwater management.</p>
<p>17 – Nagog Pond Improvements and PFAS Mitigation</p>	<p>The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. This article authorizes the borrowing of up to \$50 million for improvements to water supply, treatment, and distribution at Nagog Pond, and PFAS mitigation at Nagog Pond, Second Division Well and the Hugh Cargill Wellhead. This authorization to borrow is requested in advance of the final regulations, to enable the Town to act quickly, and to qualify for available Federal funds and grants that may require prior approval of funding by Town Meeting. These funds will be borrowed and spent as needed. Approval of this article would allow the Town to appropriate the sum of \$50,000,000, or any other sum, for the construction of water supply and water treatment facilities and improvements at the Nagog Pond water treatment plant to ensure the mitigation of PFAS at impacted water supplies.</p>

<p>19 – Minuteman Regional Technical High School District Budget</p>	<p>The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. As a member of the Minuteman Regional Technical High School District, Concord agrees to pay an assessed share of the regional district’s operating budget. The amount of the assessment paid by each town participating in the regional district is determined by a formula established in the regional agreement and relies in part on a rolling 4-year average of enrollment for member communities. This article authorizes the payment of Concord’s FY25 assessment of \$1,732,806. As the assessment of each member town is a function of proportional enrollment, we anticipate the trend of higher assessments will continue in the future. Our FY25 assessment is 6.15% higher than in FY24, and 14.9% higher than FY23.</p>
<p>20 – Concord-Carlisle Regional School District Budget</p>	<p>The Finance Committee will submit an amendment and recommend Affirmative Action on the amended article, at the Guideline Amount of \$26,020,325 inclusive of debt service, which is an operating budget of \$23,029,906 before debt service. The operating budget represents the controllable costs, much of which is variable with enrollment between the two towns. The budget presented by the CCRSD is not in accordance with the Finance Committee Budget Guidelines, which provides for the same 3.26% increase for CCRSD as for CPS and the Town. However, as enrollment at CCHS continues to decline, the cost per student is rising. At Guideline, the budget for operations, net of debt service, is approximately 10% higher per student than last year. Said differently, the FY25 regional budget of \$38,974,907 represents a 2.87% increase over FY24, while serving approximately 100 fewer students next year. The regional budget's assessment, net of Chapter 70 and other revenues is \$34,206,894; an increase of 2.87% over FY24. Concord’s allocated share of the CRSD assessment is \$26,140,908, an increase of 3.09%, or \$783,062 over FY25.</p>
<p>21 – Amenities Building at Concord-Carlisle High School</p>	<p>This article will not be moved.</p>
<p>23 – Concord Public Schools Operating Budget</p>	<p>The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. The CPS operating budget met the guideline for spending issued by the Finance Committee.</p>
<p>24 – Concord Public Schools Capital Budget</p>	<p>The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article.</p>
<p>25 – Appropriation to Middle School Stabilization Fund</p>	<p>The Finance Committee has voted not to move this article. The Middle School Stabilization Fund was established by September 2020 Town Meeting, in anticipation of the expected eventual approval of a substantial amount of borrowing to fund the construction of a new middle school. The target amount, to help offset some of the property tax increases that will result from the middle school borrowing, was set at \$5,000,000. Article 25 would have authorized the transfer of \$477,633.33 from Free Cash to the Stabilization Fund, which would bring the balance of the fund to \$5,000,000. However previously borrowed funds that have yet to be spent</p>

	are earning interest, which is applied to the Middle School Stabilization Fund. This interest should be sufficient to achieve the target amount.
33 – In-Town Solar Expansion	The Finance Committee has deferred recommendation on this article until Town Meeting. The Concord Municipal Light Plant (“CMLP”) may request authorization to issue general obligation debt for the procurement of control software and a utility scale battery. The costs of the project are still being developed. The system will be owned and operated by CMLP and will permit local storage of power purchased at reduced rates during overnight hours, to offset more expensive peak-hour energy purchases. Solar power that is produced in excess of our needs may be stored for overnight use. The debt service (principal and interest payments) will be paid from CMLP revenues; the costs and benefits of the system will accrue to its ratepayers. In addition to advancing the Town’s Climate Action and Resiliency, this investment is expected to provide long-term net savings to ratepayers.
40 – Community Preservation Appropriation Recommendations	The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on all projects except item F . For clarity, Affirmative Action is recommended on projects listed as items A, B, C, D, E, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P and Q in this article. The total appropriation sought in the article was \$1,878,320, of which \$125,000 is related to item F. The amount of \$455,084 will remain in CPC Undesignated Funds, and \$250,000 will remain in Open Space Reserve Funds. All projects were reviewed and approved by the Town Community Preservation Committee (CPC) and are funded by monies collected as a 1.5% surcharge on property tax bills supplemented by partial state matching funds.
43 – Amend Departmental Revolving Funds Bylaw	The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. This article adds a revolving fund for the Town’s Ambulance Service, including capital costs for purchase and/or replacement of an ambulance and related equipment.
44 – Authorize Expenditure of Revolving Funds under Mass. Gen, Laws 44 Sec 53 E1/2	The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. This is a routine authorization of annual spending limits from Revolving Funds, expenditures made pursuant to the Town’s Revolving Fund By-Law with the approval of the Town Manager.
45 – Light Plant Expenditures and Payment in Lieu of Taxes	The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. This is a routine, non-controversial annual action authorizing the Light Plant to expend its income from operations for the expenses of the Light Plant, and further provides for the transfer of \$495,000 (or some other sum) from the Operating Fund of the Light Plant to be used by the Board of Assessors to reduce the tax levy for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. For further information, please see the Enterprise Fund Budget Book, at https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/41295/FY24-Enterprise-Budget-Book

<p>46 – Solid Waste Disposal Fund Expenditures</p>	<p>The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. This action authorizes the Town Manager to expend user fee revenue from the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025 and cash on hand in the Solid Waste Disposal Fund to operate the Town’s curbside solid waste and recycling collection and disposal program. <i>For further information, (see #45).</i></p>
<p>47 – Sewer System Expenditures</p>	<p>The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. This action authorizes the Town Manager to expend user fee revenue from the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, and cash on hand in the Sewer Fund for the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the Town’s sewer system. <i>For further information, (see #45).</i></p>
<p>48 – Sewer Improvement Fund Expenditures</p>	<p>The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. This is a routine, non-controversial annual action. The Sewer Improvement Fund is a sub-fund of the Sewer Fund consisting of improvement fees paid by certain properties for connecting to the sewer system. The Article authorizes expenditure from the Fund under the direction and control of the Town Manager for construction and expansion of sewer lines and treatment facility capacity. <i>For further information, (see #45).</i></p>
<p>49 – Water System Expenditures</p>	<p>The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. This annual action authorizes the Town Manager to expend user fee revenue, special service fees, and jobbing services by the Water and Sewer Division of Concord Public Works for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025 and cash on hand in the Water Fund for the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the Town’s water system. <i>Further information, (see #45).</i></p>
<p>50 – Authorize Expenditure from Peg Access & Cable-Related Fund</p>	<p>The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. This is a routine, non-controversial annual action authorizing the Town Manager to expend the cash on hand and revenue generated by Comcast from its Concord customers on cable-related purposes in accordance with the Town’s license agreement. PEG access services are Public, Educational and Governmental local cable television channels. The Fund Balance as of July 1, 2023 was \$1,805,291.50.</p>
<p>51 – Beede Swim and Fitness Center Fund Expenditures</p>	<p>The Finance Committee recommends Affirmative Action on this article. This is a routine, non-controversial annual action authorizing the Town Manager to expend user fee revenue from the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025 and cash on hand in the Beede Enterprise Fund. For further information see the Enterprise Fund Budget Book, at https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/41295/FY24-Enterprise-Budget-Book</p>
<p>52 – Unpaid Bills</p>	<p>Presented at Town Meeting</p>
<p>53 – Debt Rescission</p>	<p>No action required.</p>

APPENDICES

- Appendix One. Select Board Recommendations on Articles
- Appendix Two: Consent Calendar
- Appendix Three: Create Stormwater Enterprise Fund

HANDOUT (on tables at Town Meeting)

- Estimated Impact of Town Meeting Spending on Your Tax Bill
- QR Code for Accessing the Warrant online

ONLINE RESOURCES

- **Glossary of Terms Commonly Used in Municipal Finance**
<https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/47284/Glossary-of-Terms-Commonly-Used-in-Municipal-Finance>
- **Proposition 2&1/2 – The Levy Explained**
<https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/47286/The-Levy-Limit-Explained>
- **Report on Reserve Fund Activity**
<https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/47285/Reserve-Fund-Account>
- **FY25 CPS Budget Book 03-04-2024**
<https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/47282/FY25-CPS-Budget-Book-3-4-24>
- **FY25 CCRSD Budget Book 03-04-2024**
<https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/47281/FY25-CCRSD-Budget-Book-3-4-2024>

APPENDIX ONE: SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS ON ARTICLES

2024 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Article #	Article Name	Sponsor	Select Board Recommendation
1	Choose Town Officers	Select Board	N/A
2	Hear Reports	Select Board	N/A
3	Meeting Procedure	Finance Committee	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
4	Ratify Personnel Board Classification Actions	Personnel Board	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
5	Ratify Personnel Board Classification & Compensation Plan	Personnel Board	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
6	Personnel Bylaw Amendments	Personnel Board	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
7	Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Line Item Adjustments	Chief Financial Officer	Report at Town Meeting – 5-0-0
8	Fiscal Year 2025 Town Budget	Town Manager	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
9	Capital Improvement & Debt Plan	Town Manager	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
10	OPEB Trust Fund Appropriation	Chief Financial Officer	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
11	OPEB Trust Fund Expense	Chief Financial Officer	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
12	Appropriation to the Opioid Prevention Programs Fund	Chief Financial Officer	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
13	Funding Public Safety during the Concord250 Celebrations in 2025 Commemorating the Beginning of the American Revolution, April 19, 1775	Concord 2025 Executive Committee	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
14	Use of Free Cash	Finance Committee	Report at Town Meeting – 5-0-0
15	Establish a Permanent Senior Means Tested Property Tax Exemption	Board of Assessors	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
16	Create Stormwater Enterprise Fund	Public Works Commission	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
17	Nagog Pond Improvements and PFAS Mitigation	Public Works Commission	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
18	Select Board to Accept Easements	Public Works Commission	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
19	Minuteman Regional Technical High School District Budget	Minuteman Regional School Committee	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0

20	Concord-Carlisle Regional School District Budget	Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee	Report at Town Meeting – 5-0-0
21	Amenities Building at Concord-Carlisle High School	Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee	Report at Town Meeting – 5-0-0
22	Authorize New Middle School Naming – Name the New Concord Middle School Ellen Garrison Middle School	DEI Commission	Affirmative Action – 4-1-0
23	Concord Public Schools Operating Budget	Concord Public School Committee	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
24	Concord Public Schools Capital Budget	Concord Public School Committee	Report at Town Meeting – 5-0-0
25	Appropriation to Middle School Stabilization Fund	Finance Committee	Warrant Article withdrawn
26	Town Meeting Study Committee	Town Moderator	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
27	Citizen Petition: Town Meeting Voting Reform	Dinos Gonatas	No Action – 5-0-0
28	Citizen Petition: Remote Participation at Annual and Special Town Meetings	Scott Gillis & Mark Martines	Affirmative Action – 3-1-1
29	Citizen Petition: Use of Hand-Held Electronic Voting at Town Meetings	Scott Gillis & Mark Martines	Affirmative Action – 4-0-1
30	Authorize Select Board to Petition for Changes to Previously Approved Home Rule Petition regarding a Check Out Bag Charge	Agriculture Committee	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
31	Update Town Goals to Meet the Climate Challenge	Climate Action Committee	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
32	Fossil Fuel-Free Demonstration: Bylaw Amendments for Program Participation	Select Board	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
33	In-Town Solar Expansion	Solar Implementation Task Force	Report at Town Meeting – 5-0-0
34	Zoning Bylaw Amendment: Zoning Map & MBTA Communities Multi-Family Overlay District	Planning Board	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
35	Zoning Bylaw Amendment: Two-Family Dwelling Unit in Residence B Zoning District	Planning Board	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
36	Zoning Bylaw Amendment: Floodplain Conservancy District	Planning Board	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
37	Zoning Bylaw Amendment: General Housekeeping – Multiple Sections	Planning Board	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0

38	Citizen Petition: Citizen Support for a New Cell Tower Located at the Landfill at 755 Walden Street	Alisha Boyajian	Report at Town Meeting – 5-0-0
39	Citizen Petition: Citizen Support for a New Cell Tower Located at the Public Works Parcel on Keyes Road	Alisha Boyajian	Report at Town Meeting – 5-0-0
40	Community Preservation Appropriation Recommendations	Community Preservation Committee	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
41	Authorize a Task Force to Review and Update the Charges, Policies, and Protocols of the Historic Districts Commission and the Historical Commission	DEI Commission	Warrant Article withdrawn
42	Tourist Bylaw Amendments	Select Board	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
43	Amend Departmental Revolving Funds Bylaw	Town Manager	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
44	Authorize Expenditure of Revolving Funds under Mass. Gen. Laws 44 § 53 E1/2	Town Manager	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
45	Light Plant Expenditures and Payment in Lieu of Taxes	Town Manager	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
46	Solid Waste Disposal Fund Expenditures	Town Manager	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
47	Sewer System Expenditures	Town Manager	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
48	Sewer Improvement Fund Expenditures	Town Manager	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
49	Water System Expenditures	Town Manager	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
50	Authorize Expenditure from PEG Access & Cable-Related Fund	Town Manager	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
51	Beede Swim and Fitness Center Enterprise Fund Expenditures	Town Manager	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
52	Unpaid Bills	Chief Financial Officer	Affirmative Action – 5-0-0
53	Debt Rescission	Chief Financial Officer	No Motion Expected

APPENDIX TWO: CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION TO ADVANCE FOR CONSIDERATION AND TAKE ACTION ON CERTAIN ARTICLES WITHOUT DEBATE (2024 CONSENT CALENDAR)

Mr. Patel moves: that the 2024 Annual Town Meeting advance for consideration the Articles in the table below and take action on such Articles without debate, provided, that upon the request of ten (10) voters at this Meeting, made before the vote is taken on this motion, an Article, or, in the Moderator's discretion, a portion thereof, shall be dropped from the Consent Calendar and shall be acted upon in the ordinary course of business at this Town Meeting.

Article 2	<p>HEAR REPORTS Affirmative Action Recommended By: Select Board Motion: That the Town receive the 2023 Annual Report. Reason: Routine, non-controversial action.</p>
Article 3	<p>MEETING PROCEDURE Affirmative Action Recommended By: Finance Committee, Select Board Motion: That in order to assure compliance with the requirements of the Mass. Gen. Laws c. 59, § 21C, the Meeting adopt the following Rule of the Meeting:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RULE OF THE MEETING</p> <p>1. <u>Articles for appropriations supported from current taxation and/ or available funds.</u> Any motion made under a warrant article or a motion to amend that would increase the appropriation amount over the amount recommended by the Finance Committee and designated by it as the "allocation at levy limit," or that would provide for an appropriation where the Finance Committee is recommending NO ACTION, must specify the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the original motion or a motion to amend shall specify the amount of increase over the appropriation recommended by the Finance Committee and the source of funding- whether from available funds, taxation within the levy limit, or contingent upon approval of an override ballot vote following the conclusion of Town Meeting if such ballot is voted by the Board of Selectmen in accordance with state law; b. if the proposed increased appropriation is proposed to be funded from taxation within the levy limit, the original motion or motion to amend shall specify the source of funding as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o a reduction in the appropriation amount already voted under a previous article or within the article currently being considered; or o a maximum amount that may be appropriated within the levy limit under a subsequent article in the warrant. <p>2. <u>Articles for appropriations supported from borrowing.</u> The Finance Committee shall report to the Meeting summarizing its recommendations for new tax-supported borrowing authority to be offered at this Meeting and for which the debt service is proposed to be funded within the levy limit.</p> <p>Any motion made under a warrant article or a motion to amend that would increase the appropriation amount to be met by a borrowing authorization over the amount recommended by the Finance Committee or that would provide for an appropriation to be met by a borrowing authorization where the Finance Committee is recommending NO ACTION, must specify the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The original motion or a motion to amend shall specify the amount of increase over the appropriation recommended by the Finance Committee and shall make the increase contingent upon approval of a debt exclusion or capital outlay exclusion ballot vote following the conclusion of Town Meeting if such ballot is voted by the Select Board in accordance with state law; or b. The original motion or motion to amend shall include a corresponding and offsetting reduction in another borrowing authorization from among those listed by the Finance Committee, either by a reduction in the amount already voted under a previous article or by setting a maximum amount of debt that may be authorized within the levy limit under a subsequent article in the warrant.

	<p>3. <u>Articles making appropriations to be kept open.</u> Any Article making appropriations shall be kept open until the final adjournment of the Meeting.</p> <p>Reason: Routine and non-controversial at hearing; the motion is identical to Meeting Procedure motions passed annually and unanimously for more than fifteen years.</p>
Article 10	<p>OPEB TRUST FUND APPROPRIATION Affirmative Action Recommended by: Finance Committee, Select Board Motion: That the Town raise and appropriate \$1,364,608; and transfer \$85,275 from the Light Fund; \$17,698 from the Broadband fund, for a total appropriation of \$1,467,851 to fund the Town's FY25 contribution to the Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund (OPEB Trust) established under Mass. Gen. Laws c. 32B, § 20. Reason: Routine General Fund appropriation to meet the Town's OPEB obligations. This appropriation was made in prior years as part of the Town's Budget article, and is now being appropriated for all funds (General, Enterprise, and Other) in a stand-alone article consistent with best practice as recommended by the Town's auditors and the Massachusetts Department of Revenue; non-controversial at hearing.</p>
Article 11	<p>OPEB TRUST FUND EXPENSE Affirmative Action Recommended by: Finance Committee, Select Board Motion: That the Town appropriate from the OPEB Fund established under Mass. Gen. Laws c. 32B, § 20 \$275,000 for OPEB Fund expenses. Reason: Non-controversial at hearing; routine action to authorize payment of OPEB Fund expenses by direct payment from the Fund, instead of by deduction from earnings as was done in prior years, consistent with the recommendation of the Town's financial advisors.</p>
Article 12	<p>APPROPRIATION OF OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS Affirmative Action Recommended By: Select Board, Finance Committee Motion: That the Town take affirmative action on Article 12 as printed in the Warrant. Reason: Non-controversial at hearing; necessary action to enable Town to use for permissible programs the sum of \$76,871.49 received from state opioid settlement fund.</p>
Article 15	<p>ESTABLISH A PERMANENT SENIOR MEANS TESTED PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION Affirmative Action Recommend By: Select Board, Finance Committee, Board of Assessors Motion: That the Town take affirmative action on Article 15 as printed in the Warrant. Reason: Non-controversial at hearing; permanent enactment of currently existing provision previously approved by Town Meeting.</p>
Article 18	<p>SELECT BOARD TO ACCEPT EASEMENTS Affirmative Action Recommended by: Select Board; Public Works Commission Motion: That the Town take affirmative action on Article 18 as printed in the Warrant. Reason: Non-controversial at hearing; one-year authorization for Select Board to acquire easements transferred to the Town without a fee for various access, passage, and utility purposes as required by permits, utility and infrastructure agreements, or memoranda of understanding.</p>
Article 30	<p>AUTHORIZE SELECT BOARD TO PETITION FOR CHANGES TO PREVIOUSLY APPROVED HOME RULE PETITION REGARDING A CHECK OUT BAG CHARGE Affirmative Action Recommended by: Select Board; Agriculture Committee Motion: That the Town take affirmative action on Article 30 as printed in the Warrant. Reason: Exemption of farmstands from home rule petition approved by 2022 Annual Town Meeting in recognition of practical impediments to compliance by farmstands; non-controversial at hearing.</p>
Article 32	<p>FOSSIL FUEL-FREE DEMONSTRATION: BYLAW AMENDMENTS FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPATION Affirmative Action Recommended by: Select Board Motion: That the Town take affirmative action on Article 32 as printed in the Warrant. Reason: Non-controversial at hearing; amendment of bylaw previously enacted by Concord Town Meeting as recommended by state program for all communities participating in Fossil Fuel-Free Demonstration Project.</p>

Article 36	<p>ZONING BYLAW AMENDMENT: FLOODPLAIN CONSERVANCY DISTRICT Affirmative Action Recommended by: Planning Board, Select Board Motion: That the Town take affirmative action on Article 36 as printed in the Warrant. Reason: Federally mandated changes to flood plain map necessary to ensure continued eligibility of Concord residents to obtain coverage under Federal flood insurance program.</p>
Article 37	<p>ZONING BYLAW AMENDMENT: GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING – MULTIPLE SECTIONS Affirmative Action Recommended by: Planning Board, Select Board Motion: That the Town take affirmative action on Article 37 as printed in the Warrant. Reason: Housekeeping amendment to correct various errors throughout the Zoning Bylaw in spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.; non-controversial at hearing.</p>
Article 42	<p>TOURIST BYLAW AMENDMENTS Affirmative Action Recommended by: Select Board Motion: That the Town take affirmative action on Article 42 as printed in the Warrant. Reason: Non-controversial at hearing; edits language for gender neutrality and clarifies that bylaw requires a license for all tour guide services via vehicle and solicitation of tourists.</p>
Article 43	<p>AMEND DEPARTMENTAL REVOLVING FUNDS BYLAW Affirmative Action Recommended by: Finance Committee, Select Board Motion: That the Town take affirmative action on Article 43 as printed in the Warrant. Reason: Non-controversial at hearing; adds new Ambulance Revolving Fund for acceptance of program receipts and payment of program expenses.</p>
Article 44	<p>AUTHORIZE EXPENDITURE OF REVOLVING FUNDS UNDER MASS. GEN. LAWS C. 44, § 53E1/2 Affirmative Action Recommended By: Finance Committee, Select Board Motion: That the Town take affirmative action on Article 44 as printed in the Warrant. Reason: Routine authorization of annual spending limits for Revolving Funds, expenditures made pursuant to the Town's Revolving Fund Bylaw with the approval of the Town Manager; non-controversial at hearing.</p>
Article 45	<p>LIGHT PLANT EXPENDITURES & PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES Affirmative Action Recommended by: Finance Committee, Select Board Motion: That the Town authorize the income from sales of electricity and broadband and from servicing and jobbing during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, together with the balance of operating cash in the Light Plant Fund, to be expended under the direction and control of the Town Manager, without further appropriation, for the expenses of the Light Plant for the fiscal year, as defined in Mass. Gen. Laws c. 164, § 57, and/or for other plant extensions, enlargements, additions, renewals, and reconstruction; and further to authorize a transfer of \$464,500 from the Operating Fund of the Light Plant to be used by the Board of Assessors to reduce the tax levy for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. Reason: Routine annual action; non-controversial at hearing. Authorizes the Light Plant to expend its income for operations and provides for the transfer of \$464,500 from the Operating Fund of the Light Plant to be used by the Board of Assessors to reduce the tax levy for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.</p>
Article 46	<p>SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL FUND EXPENDITURES Affirmative Action Recommended by: Finance Committee, Select Board, [Public Works Commission] Motion: That the Town take affirmative action on Article 46 as printed in the Warrant. Reason: Routine annual authorization; non-controversial at hearing; authorizes the Town Manager to expend user fee revenue from the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025 and cash on hand in the Solid Waste Disposal Fund to operate the Town's curbside solid waste and recycling collection and disposal program</p>
Article 47	<p>SEWER SYSTEM EXPENDITURES Affirmative Action Recommended by: Finance Committee, Select Board, Public Works Commission Motion: That the Town take affirmative action on Article 47 as printed in the Warrant.</p>

	<p>Reason: Routine annual enterprise fund authorization; non-controversial at hearing; authorizes the Town Manager to expend user fee revenue for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025 and cash on hand in the Sewer Fund for the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the Town's sewer system.</p>
Article 48	<p>SEWER IMPROVEMENT FUND EXPENDITURES Affirmative Action Recommended by: Finance Committee, Select Board, Public Works Commission Motion: That the Town take affirmative action on Article 48 as printed in the Warrant. Reason: Routine annual action; non-controversial at hearing. The Sewer Improvement Fund is a sub-fund of the Sewer Fund consisting of fees paid by certain properties connecting to the sewer system; the Article authorizes expenditure from the Fund for construction and expansion of sewer lines and treatment facility capacity.</p>
Article 49	<p>WATER SYSTEM EXPENDITURES Affirmative Action Recommended by: Finance Committee, Select Board, Public Works Commission] Motion: That the Town take affirmative action on Article 49 as printed in the Warrant. Reason: Routine annual action; non-controversial at hearing; authorizes the Town Manager to expend user fee revenue for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025 and cash on hand in the Water Fund for the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the Town's water system.</p>
Article 50	<p>AUTHORIZE EXPENDITURE FROM PEG ACCESS AND CABLE-RELATED FUND Affirmative Action Recommended by: Finance Committee, Select Board, PEG Access Committee Motion: That the Town transfer from the PEG Access and Cable-Related Fund the amount of \$596,080 to be expended under the direction of the Town Manager for necessary and expedient cable-related purposes consistent with the Comcast licensing agreement during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. Reason: Routine transfer; non-controversial at hearing.</p>
Article 51	<p>BEEDE SWIM AND FITNESS CENTER ENTERPRISE FUND EXPENDITURES Affirmative Action Recommended by: Finance Committee, Select Board, Recreation Commission Motion: That the Town take affirmative action on Article 51 as printed in the Warrant. Reason: Routine authorization; non-controversial at hearing.</p>

APPENDIX THREE: CREATE STORMWATER ENTERPRISE FUND

STORMWATER UTILITY ENTERPRISE FUND BYLAW

SECTION 1: General Provisions

A. Title. This bylaw shall be known as the "Stormwater Utility Enterprise Fund Bylaw of the Town of Concord, Massachusetts," hereinafter referred to as the "bylaw."

B. Purpose. The stormwater management program of the Town shall be funded by revenue collected through the stormwater fee and such other revenue as may, from time to time, be appropriated. The stormwater management program is designed to collect and treat stormwater to promote the health and safety of the public, to protect property from flooding and the damage caused by stormwater runoff, to protect and manage water quality by controlling the level of pollutants in stormwater runoff, and to comply with federal and state stormwater management mandates and permits.

SECTION 2: Definitions

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this bylaw, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly requires a different meaning:

STORMWATER: The surface water runoff from precipitation, whether or not collected and discharged via pipes.

IMPERVIOUS SURFACE: Any material or structure on or above the ground that prevents water from infiltrating into the underlying soil, including without limitation roads, paved parking lots and driveways, sidewalks, and rooftops.

STORMWATER FEE: The user fee imposed pursuant to this bylaw by the Town of Concord for providing Stormwater Management.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT: All services provided by the Town which relate to the:

- (1) Transfer, control, conveyance, treatment or movement of Stormwater runoff through Town-owned infrastructure;
- (2) Maintenance, repair, grading and replacement of existing Stormwater Management Systems and Facilities owned by the Town;
- (3) Planning, development, design and construction of additional Stormwater Management Systems and Facilities to meet current and anticipated needs, including grading of roads to facilitate the movement of Stormwater;
- (4) Regulation of the use of Stormwater Management services, systems and facilities;
- (5) Compliance with applicable local, state and federal Stormwater Management; and
- (6) Services addressing the quality of Stormwater runoff as well as the quantity thereof.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND FACILITIES: Natural and manmade channels, swales, ditches, rivers, streams, brooks, creeks, wetlands, branches, reservoirs, ponds, drainageways, drainage structures, conveyances, storm drains, catch basins, inlets, gutters, pipes, culverts, bridges, headwalls, storm sewers, lakes, outfalls, and other physical works, properties, and improvements that collect, transport, transfer, control, pump, treat, convey, detain, retain, dispose of, or otherwise influence the movement of Stormwater runoff.

SECTION 3: Responsibility for Stormwater Management

The Concord Public Works shall be responsible for Stormwater Management and all Town owned or accepted Stormwater Management Systems and Facilities.

SECTION 4: Stormwater Utility Enterprise Fund

- A. A Stormwater Fund shall be created to hold the revenue collected through Stormwater Fees and such other funds as may be appropriated or gifted to said Stormwater Utility Enterprise Fund from other sources, including grants and loans.
- B. The Stormwater Utility Enterprise Fund may be used for any lawful Stormwater Management purpose including:
 - 1. The acquisition by gift, purchase or condemnation of real and personal property, or interests therein necessary to construct, operate and maintain Stormwater Management Systems and Facilities;
 - 2. All direct and indirect costs of the Town applicable to the administration and implementation of Stormwater Management programs pursuant to generally accepted accounting practices (GAAP); and
 - 3. Inspection and enforcement pursuant to any applicable federal, state or Town law or regulation regarding Stormwater Management.

SECTION 5: Establishment of Stormwater Fees

- A. There shall be a fixed schedule of prices or rates established by the Public Works Commission which shall not be changed more often than once each year. Changes in rates shall not be made unless the proposed new rates are first published in a newspaper in general circulation in Concord, which may be an internet-based newspaper, and considered at a public hearing held for this purpose.
- B. The Director of Public Works shall, on an annual basis, recommend an annual budget for stormwater Management to the Town Manager for inclusion in the Annual Town Budget.
- C. The Stormwater Management budget shall, beginning no earlier than the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, include proposed Stormwater Fees established pursuant to the authority in Mass. Gen.

Laws c. 83, § 16, which, along with other revenues in the Stormwater Fund, are sufficient to pay for the Town's annual Stormwater Management budget, including operating and capital expenses.

- D. The Stormwater Fee shall be imposed on each parcel within the Town whether occupied or not, and whether owned by the Town, another public entity, or a private entity. The Stormwater Fee shall not be imposed on public streets, highways and public rights-of way.

SECTION 6: Billing, Stormwater Utility Enterprise Fund, Credits

- A. Stormwater Fees shall be billed at least annually and no more frequently than in twelve monthly increments, as determined by the Public Works Commission.
- B. The Town may impose a late fee for unpaid Stormwater Fees and may utilize any other remedy for enforcement of unpaid Stormwater Fees under applicable law.
- C. Failure of the Town to send a bill for Stormwater Fees shall not relieve a property owner from the obligation to pay Stormwater Fees.
- D. The Town may back bill for Stormwater Fees not previously billed in prior billing cycles, but may not bill for late fees or delinquency charges in connection with such back billing.
- E. Stormwater Fees shall be billed to the record owner of a property and may be consolidated in the same bill as is sent to a property owner for other services provided by the Town.
- F. The Public Works Commission shall develop a proposed Stormwater Management credit policy which shall provide credits or adjustments for Stormwater Fees to be applied to properties with Stormwater improvements made by the property owner, land retained without impervious surface, or properties based on an owner's income.

SECTION 7: Appeals

- A. In the event a property owner believes that a Stormwater Fee applied to it has been incorrectly charged, the property owner may, within thirty (30) days of the issuance of an invoice for a Stormwater Fee, and after full payment of the Stormwater Fee charged, apply to the Concord Public Works for an abatement of all or part the Stormwater Fee. Such application shall be supported by such information as is necessary for a reasonable person to conclude that the Stormwater Fee was incorrectly charged.
- B. Concord Public Works shall have sixty (60) days to consider an application for abatement and render a written decision approving or denying the application, in whole or in part.

- C. A property owner aggrieved by Concord Public Works' denial of its application for an abatement under this Section 6 may request a hearing before the Public Works Commission within thirty (30) days of the date of the Concord Public Works' decision. The request for a hearing shall be in writing and shall specify the basis for the property owner's dispute of the Concord Public Works' decision.
- D. The Public Works Commission shall set a date for a hearing which shall be within sixty (60) days of the filing of the appeals, and notice setting forth the place, date and time of hearing shall be sent to the property owner at least ten (10) day prior to the hearing date.
- E. The Public Works Commission shall render a written decision within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the hearing affirming the decision of the Concord Public Works or reversing the action in whole or in part and specifying the amount of Stormwater Fees (if any) to be paid or credited the property owner.
- F. Nothing herein shall limit the ability of a property owner to seek an abatement of Stormwater Fees pursuant to the provisions of Mass. Gen. Laws c. 83, § 16E.



Town House Function Room, late 1800s.

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we cut our production cost by 50%.*

TOWN MEETING

Begins

Monday, April 29, 2024

7:00 pm

Concord-Carlisle Regional High School

500 Walden Street

**Adjourned Sessions start at 7:00pm – if necessary
on Tues (30th), Wed (May 1st), Thurs (May 2nd), Fri (May 3rd)**

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*******Article 34: Zoning Bylaw Amendment – Zoning Map
& MBTA Communities Multi-Family Overlay District *******

This Article will be heard on Tuesday evening at 7:15pm.



Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

November 21, 2024

6

Liaison Updates

Finance Committee liaisons to provide updates

Requested by: FC Chair

Action Sought: to provide update

Proposed Motion(s)

None anticipated.

Additional Information

Liaisons will provide a verbal update, if any, for their assigned committees. The Chair, at his discretion, will make any liaison changes as he deems necessary or at the request of liaison.

Board Action

<i>Motion</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>	<i>Disposition</i>

11.20.24 Chairs' Breakfast summary	Start: 8:30 a.m.
Person/Board	Notes
Mary Hartman, Select Board	Select Board held its 2nd joint meeting on capital requests and approved the PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) policy and the RTE (residential tax exemption). December 3, at 3:00 p.m., the SB will hold a hybrid training on the First Amendment and how to keep a public discourse civil - all committee members are invited to participate. Next Chairs' breakfast, Dec. 18, will be a social (no reporting).
Mark Howell, Select Board	MCI Concord: the State signed the contract for the \$725K funding for planning. Warner's Pond: the committee will be looking at all three groups' proposals at its Dec. 17 meeting, with a public forum later to discuss the options.
Christina Kendricks, Council on Aging	The COA has been working on its budget and goals.
Sven Weber, Public Works Commission	Public Works recycling program now has 3700 subscribers, an increase of 400 subscribers since the new trash and recycling bins were issued. National Grid's work on Monument Street should be wrapped up soon. The PWC is preparing the stormwater fee structure and budget for Town Meeting.
Paul Boehm, 2229 Main Street Task Force, Community Preservation Committee	2229 Main Street: the task force's report is done and will be presented to the Select Board in December and for a public forum in January. CPC: the committee received 7 applications, and with \$2.9M in funding this year (including reserves) is under-subscribed. CPC expects to receive lots of applications next year.
Andrea Fountain, Select Board staff	The Select Board is summarizing its survey responses. There will be new deadlines for submissions for the Dec. 2 SB meeting.
Mike Lawson, Economic Vitality Commission	The EVC is finalizing 2 Warrant Articles: 1) eliminate parking requirements in the business districts, and 2) all accessory uses in industrial areas.
Julie Viola, Regional School District	The RSD participated in the joint capital meetings and is considering alternatives for the amenities building, now that they have the architect's 5 sets of drawings and cost estimates. The RSD will hold 3 coffee sessions: Dec. 4 in Concord, January in Carlisle, and Feb. in Boston.

Carrie Rankin, Concord Public Schools & RSD	The RSD is looking more closely at the custom build designs for the amenities building, which have a 50-year life span and cost under \$2M. The Middle School is under budget, and the Schools have been talking about the Peabody School disposition - Schools will release the Peabody to the Town in March. Talks continue with the Town on how to maintain (mothball) the Peabody until sale or re-use. Thoreau elementary school is engaged in a massive fundraising effort for its campus improvements, including using CPC money and private donations.
Lois Wasoff, FinCom	FinCom is focused on setting the preliminary guidelines using a 2-level approach - start with economic factors, then examine school and Town needs, expectations and ability to pay. FinCom's next meeting is Thursday (Nov. 21), and FinCom is looking at issuing a joint guideline for the Regional School District with the Carlisle FinCom. Concord is keeping Carlisle informed on the Concord progress.
Sarah Grimwood, Natural Resources Commission	The NRC is looking forward to seeing the Warner's Pond Task Force report.
Randy Kring, Board of Health	The Board of Health's needs survey is closed and the data are being compiled. The BOH is working with town food establishments as prep for Concord250. Covid tests are available at the Council on Aging, Libraries, and BOH. The BOH has hired a mental health clinician for Concord residents.
Keith Bergman, Municipal Affordable Housing Trust	MAHT is grateful for the \$740K support from CPC and the \$500K support from the Town Manager's ARPA fund. Future funding (\$500K) will be sought from CPC going forward. The next Housing Roundtable is Dec. 10, 5:00 p.m. via Zoom.
Janet Miller, Climate Action Committee	The CAC supports replacing the Doug White fields with natural turf, not artificial turf.
Dan Schmid, Agriculture Committee	It's too dry for crops. The Ag Committee is planning its Spring Forum, with a focus on colonial agriculture retrospective.
Eric Moore, Town Meeting Study Task Force	They are looking at obstacles at Town Meeting and want to meet with the Select Board, FinCom, and School Committee to get their input.
Nancy Nelson, Historical Commission	The Nov. 14 public forum on the historic preservation plan was well-attended. The HC has an application to CPC for a study on modern (post WWII) housing structures, like in Conantum neighborhood.
Stephan Bader, Concord Housing Authority	CHA is working with State authorities to fund the repair/replacement of the Strawberry Hill housing units where the septic system has failed. The CHA is funding a unit at Forest Ridge and may purchase another such affordable housing unit somewhere next year.
Julie McClure, Concord Housing Development Corporation	The CHDC is working on getting legal documents drafted to complete the Assabet housing project off Old Marlboro Road for a conveyance from CHDC to Habitat for Humanity for the 3 units H4H is building. Volunteer help will be solicited to build these 3 homes. Junction Village is on hold and will be reviewed in January. CHDC is reviewing its buy-down program.
Adjourn: 9:15 a.m.	

Concord Finance Committee Liaison Report

For meeting on Thursday, November 21, 2024 | Last updated: 11/20/24 4:00 PM

Board/Committee	Liaison	Updates
Select Board and General Updates	Eric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See 11/20 email for Chair’s breakfast recap (attended by Lois and Karlen) Select Board voted to retain Residential Tax Exemption (RTE) at its 11/18 meeting.
2229 Main Street Advisory Task Force	Kathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Task Force is in the final stages of preparing their report for publication in mid-December. The Task Force has recommended: <i>The 2229 Main Street Task Force recommends that the Select Board move forward on the path towards potential acquisition of the 2229 Main Street property. In order to both take advantage of the opportunities for meeting the needs of the Town as well as to fully control the use of the property, the Task Force recommends that, while final remediation is still underway at the site, the Select Board: 1) Formally express to the EPA an interest in potentially acquiring the property 2) Direct Town Counsel to enter into negotiations with the EPA and DOJ to determine whether terms and conditions regarding financial matters and liability protections that the Select Board deems favorable to the town can be achieved 3) In parallel to the legal negotiations, initiate a multi-site planning process through which the specific uses and costs of development at the 2229 Main Street property can be determined</i>
Community Preservation Committee	Kathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee is in the final stages of reviewing applications and discussing the merits for granting funding. It was noted that this was one of the first years where the amount of dollars sought by applicants was below the level of dollars available. Discussions are underway for how those dollars could be or should be earmarked for future applications.
Concord Middle School Building Committee	Karlen	<p>Recap of 11/14 meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project is 83% done, \$7.4.M in contingency funds are still available. Project is under budget. The estimated project total is \$111,516,000. School expects to start moving into the new Middle School during the week of February 10, with classroom instruction starting February 24. Dr. Hunter is cautious about the Committee approving additional funding from the contingency funds for music department (risers = \$37K, music instruments, amount not determined) because she is concerned about surprise costs that will come from demolition of the Sanborn School (possible hazardous wastes). On February 15, 2025, the School Committee will hold a community surplus session where Concord residents can take away any surplussed furniture, but not for resale. Mr. Herchek, School Committee member, sought clarification on the “mothballing” process for the Peabody School, including taking out the heating oil. Much is left for discussion with the Town Manager’s office and CFO. Link to meeting materials: https://www.cmsbuildingproject.org/november-14-2024-meeting Next meeting is Dec. 19, 7:30 a.m.
Concord Municipal Affordable Housing Trust	Lois	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Trust met on October 29 and November 19. The Trust has applied for \$740,000 in CPC funds to implement Housing Production Plan priority production products.and will be receiving \$500,000 in ARPA funds for use in connection with the acquisition of surplus state property at 91B Main Street. It is continuing to support attempts to get the state legislature to approve a real estate transfer fee and a building permit surcharge to create sources for funding in future years. There was discussion at both meetings about the CHDC buy-down program, in particular about whether the priority for the program should be on acquiring units (such as smaller homes) that might otherwise be torn down. No formal vote was taken on the issue at either meeting. The next Housing Roundtable is scheduled for December 10.

Concord Municipal Light Plant	Karlen	<p>Recap of 11/15 meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Middle School RFP is about to be issued – covers rooftop solar and canopy solar. • The Light Plant’s power sources, for 2025, are: 34% nuclear, 15% wind, 6% solar, 20% hydro, and 26% market-supplied. • Smart meter installation is 95-98% complete for residences; still have 1400 commercial meters to install. Estimated completion by February 2025 – then can start Time Of Use rates. • The Light Board heard an operating forecast for 2025 and gave a positive sense of direction to staff for completion of the cost of service study and propose rates, to be voted on at the Dec. 4 meeting. Estimated impact is a 5% increase in electric rates. • The Light Plant’s 5-year capital plan for electric includes \$16M for 2025, \$8M for 2026, and \$12M for 2027(of which \$10.4M was already approved by Town Meeting for FY28 for energy storage (battery)). • Link to meeting materials: https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/51499/2024-11-15-Light-Board-Agenda-with-Meeting-Materials • Next meeting is Dec. 4 (vote on rates).
Economic Vitality Committee	Quazi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eric met with EVC Chair on 11/19 in follow-up to 11/7 FinCom meeting presentation – agreed to work together to identify data that may be helpful for the January Economic Development Forum, specifically revenue and cost impacts of other recent developments of parcels of comparable acreage to the parcels under consideration in Concord (MCI, 2229 Main St, Keyes Road)
Financial Audit Advisory Committee	Karlen	<p>Recap of 11/6 meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAAC discussed drafting a letter to the regional school committee regarding its clean audit ending June 30, 2023. • FAAC reviewed the Light plant audit for calendar year ending Dec. 31, 2023. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Results: Financial statements are fair in all material aspects. Internal controls are strong and operating procedures are efficient. • Timing of the Town’s FY23 audit is delayed; Marcum rep. will meet with Concord CFO on timing. Should start Town audit in November; may be delayed until March 2025. • Next meeting is TBD.
MCI Concord Advisory Board	Don	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive Office of Economic Development confirmed the earmarks to Concord totaling \$725k for MCI redevelopment consultants. Members of the Advisory are working with Town staff to prepare RFP’s. The Advisory will present the budget and timeline for the effort to the Select Board in late December.
PILOT Workgroup	Lois	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select Board approved the proposed PILOT policy drafted by the workgroup at its November 18 meeting.
Planning Board	Sri	<p>Recap of 10/29 meeting: West Concord Advisory Committee & Planning Board Joint Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing West Concord Master plan to take inventory of where they are and the goal is to have an accurate inventory of all the projects and their status • The committee would like to coordinate with the MCI project • recommendations were made for the committee to review some zoning in the business and village districts and other areas in West concord and this could potentially be extended to all of Concord • Shared parking solution in west concord was brought up an area where they needed planning board help (Lexington was brought up as a good example where signage was well organized and clear to show where parking was available) • Committee wants MCI discussion to take into consideration West Concord Village as integrating them would be preferable <p>Potential Zoning Bylaw Parking Requirement Discussion Administrative business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential component for parking needs to be addressed • ADU state law says no parking required if ADU is within 1/2 mile of transportation • Look at multi family, Duplexes, number of bedrooms etc

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average cost of parking spot is \$5K • MBTA project also needs to be considered • parking requirements should be simplified (1 parking lot per one bedroom, unit with 2 bedroom only 1.5 parking) • ADU parking will be included in the parking table in the Zoning bylaw document • Business parking options were discussed <p>MBTA Communities Zoning Overlay – Scenario Amendments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two changes requested by planning board at Baker Avenue proposal • Adding Concord Green to this proposal was also discussed • District compliance applications is being planned to be submitted by early next year <p>2025 ATM Zoning Bylaw Amendments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document is being updated • Some properties are out of floodplain, this may potentially impact their Flood Insurance purchase from FEMA • Changes to ADU Bylaw (1000 Sq Ft, excluding Garages)
Public Works Commission	Karlen	<p>Recap of 11/13 meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeff Murawski, Water and Sewer Superintendent of the Concord Public Works Department, guided the commission through a list of possible water and sewer capital improvements, paid through the Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds, totaling \$5.4M (water) and \$1.9M (sewer) for FY25. • Mr. Murawski also showed estimates for FY26-35 for water and sewer capital improvements of \$90M (water) and \$37M (sewer). These capital expenses would result in a 12-13% rate increase for the next several years. This may be presented through a 10-year bond authorization. • As part of the Roads Program review, the commission heard the roads in 2024 had a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) of 71. Also, last year’s snow and ice removal expense was \$614K, and the solid waste program has increased its subscribership from 3483 to 3681 subscribers. Also, there may be a 5-year bond authorization Warrant Article to cover \$25M in road improvements from the General Fund. • Next meeting is Dec. 18, 4:00 p.m. (Town Meeting Warrant review)
Schools	Dee & Pat	<p>Recap of 11/19 School Committee meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gale Associates reviewed other projects that related to outdoor restroom options recently constructed. The configuration may be either a restroom or restroom/concession stand. The concession stand would cost less than 15% of construction (or approximately \$30-40K). That was the guestimate made by the Gale rep. Design would take 3 months after all approvals are satisfied. No decisions were made nor were any confirmed costs offered. The schedule - if the SC works quickly - could possibly result in a late fall (late Nov) '25 opening - at best. • Peabody surplus: Between March through June the utility costs at the unoccupied building are estimated at \$4K/month and ~\$20K for electricity, which is significantly less than last year. On 2/15/25 Peabody will be opened up to the public to surplus inventoried items. \$100K will be set aside for disposal of leftovers. • A very brief discussion of Monday evening's meeting indicated that having the three entities present was helpful.
Mass Association of Town Finance Committees	Karlen	<p>Karlen attended 11/2 annual meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual meeting of finance committee members; almost 100 registered across 44 towns for this one-day program. Included election of ATFC officers, President’s welcome, Opening Speaker: Doug Howgate, Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation • Programs and workshops: Budgeting 101 (organizing and presenting Town budget book); Town credit & bond rating; legal update / Open Meeting & Public Records laws; school finance: one town, one budget (Town of Mansfield); Having difficult conversations. • Materials are available (ask Karlen)



Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

November 21, 2024

7

Correspondence

Mail, letters, emails, presentation, etc.

Requested by: Chief Financial Officer

Action Sought: to provide update

Proposed Motion(s)

None anticipated.

Additional Information

Board Action

<i>Motion</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>	<i>Disposition</i>

Hello Mr Dahlberg + Finance Committee

I have recently pd our 2nd quarter tax bill. We know you are not entirely responsible for the crazy increases. + we appreciate your efforts to rein them in. I can only say please keep fighting them.

Our annual tax is now 97% of the purchase price of our house (50+ yrs ago). Our annual tax takes 47% of our (net) annual ~~net~~ social security income.

Yes it's a nice looking house. We love it. We've thought about moving for at least 10 years. Recently we had to put on new roof + new heating system.

We don't (just barely) qualify for that new temporary (I hope) lower tax thing for smaller homes.

We have to ask ourselves, is Concord worth it?

Again we do thank you for trying.



Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

November 21, 2024

8

Minutes

Requested by: Don Kupka, Clerk

Action Sought: Seek Approval

Proposed Motion(s)

None anticipated.

Additional Information

Attached are the minutes of the October 24, 2024 regular and joint meeting with the Carlisle Finance Committee and November 7, 2024 regular meeting of the Finance Committee

Board Action

<i>Motion</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>	<i>Disposition</i>

**Town of Concord
Minutes of the October 24, 2024
Finance Committee Meeting
Hybrid Meeting**

Members Present: Suresh Bhatia, Peggy Briggs, Eric Dahlberg, John Garofalo, Pat Geyer, Don Kupka, Lyndsey Lis (on-line), Dee Ortner, Karlen Reed, Paul Rodriguez, Sri Tupil, Lois Wasoff.

Members Absent: Kathy Cuocolo, Greg Guarriello, Quazi Sadruzzaman

Others Attending: Anthony Ansaldi (Town CFO), Zach Lamoureux (Finance Staff); Alexa Anderson, Julie Viola, Tracey Morano, Carrie Rankin, Cynthia Rainey, and Brian Waterson (Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee Members), Dr. Laurie Hunter (Concord-Carlisle Superintendent), Bob Conry (Concord Schools CFO); Steve Ledoux (Minuteman High School/Concord Representative), Heidi Driscoll (Minuteman Superintendent), Nikki Andrade (Minuteman Business Manager); and members of the public.

1: Call to Order of the Finance Committee Meeting at 6:31 p.m. by Chair Eric Dahlberg, who summarized the agenda for today’s meeting and joint meeting process.

2: Public Comment: None

3: Liaison Reports: See the reports contained in the meeting packet.

4: Minutes: Review and approve minutes of September 26, 2024: Ms. Wasoff moved and Mr. Rodriguez seconded approval of the September 26, 2024 minutes as presented in the packet. Vote: 12 Aye, 0 Nay, 0 abstained.

5: Finance Committee’s FY26 Budget Process / Discuss Minuteman Tech Response to the Finance Committee FY26 Guideline Information Request Letter. Mr. Ledoux began the Minuteman Tech presentation by introducing the new Minuteman Superintendent, Ms. Driscoll, and the Minuteman Business Manager, Ms. Andrade. Ms. Driscoll provided Minuteman’s highlights, focusing on Concord’s 38 students, their co-op program, and athletic achievements. Ms. Andrade reviewed the overall spending, Concord’s assessment, and the three-year budget projections which assumes a 3% operating increase. She cautioned that the projections are highly volatile. Total number of students for FY26 is 698. Concord’s enrollment varies from 47-53 students over the next three years, with Concord’s projected operating assessment increasing from \$1.3M to \$1.5M, capital assessment increasing from \$509K to \$573K, and per-pupil operating expense increasing from \$28K to \$30K. She also touched on overall enrollment as of October 1, an FY24 and FY25 budget update, OPEB trust fund status, Chapter 70 state aid. Ms. Driscoll discussed the spending level for the Animal Science program and key performance indicators (DESE ranks Minuteman in the 74% percentile of all schools).

Committee members inquired about the status of the East Building (looking for educational options) and the OPEB funding schedule (fully funded by FY46, not expected to be extended).

Finance Committee's FY26 Budget Process / Discuss Concord Public Schools Response to the Finance Committee FY26 Guideline Information Request Letter. Dr. Hunter began the CPS presentation with a high-level look at trends and noted that 5-year projections are challenging. Mr. Conry noted a projected general fund increase of 2.7% for FY26 and provided updates on the out-of-district tuitions, funding sources, teacher and non-teacher salaries (3% cost of living plus steps and lanes), projected inflation rates, and risks caused by the middle school, rising electricity costs, and special education. Committee members inquired about the financial impact of students in Concord's homeless shelter, current spare capacity limits of the elementary schools, impact of upcoming stormwater fees, MCI Concord development, NOVO and Thoreau developments, and OPEB funding strategy. Chair Dahlberg asked the Schools to provide the per-pupil spending amount and encouraged Finance Committee members to submit additional questions for the schools.

7: Recap of Action Items/Adjournment: Chair Dahlberg adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

YouTube: Ctrl+Click to follow link: [October 24, 2024 FinCom meeting video](#)

Meeting Documents Link to October 24, 2024 FinCom Packet: [October 24, 2024 Meeting Packet](#)

Respectfully submitted, Don Kupka, Finance Committee Clerk, and Karlen Reed, Finance Committee Vice Clerk

**Town of Concord
Minutes of the October 24, 2024
Joint Carlisle and Concord
Finance Committees Meeting
Hybrid Meeting**

Members Present: Suresh Bhatia, Peggy Briggs, Eric Dahlberg, John Garofalo, Pat Geyer, Don Kupka, Lyndsey Lis (on-line), Dee Ortner, Karlen Reed, Paul Rodriguez, Sri Tupil, Lois Wasoff.

Members Absent: Kathy Cuocolo, Greg Guarriello, Quazi Sadruzzaman

Others Attending: Anthony Ansaldi (Town CFO), Zach Lamoureux (Finance Staff); Alexa Anderson, Julie Viola, Tracey Marano, Carrie Rankin, Cynthia Rainey, and Brian Waterson (Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee Members), Dr. Laurie Hunter (Concord-Carlisle Superintendent), Bob Conry (Concord Schools CFO); James Catacchio (Chair), Heidi Sjoberg, Victor Liang, Marc Bernstein, and Nathan Brown (Carlisle FinCom Members); Travis Snell (Carlisle Select Board Chair); and members of the public.

1: Call to Order of the Concord Finance Committee Meeting at 7:35 p.m. by Concord FinCom Chair Eric Dahlberg and of the Carlisle Finance Committee Meeting at 7:36 p.m. by Carlisle FinCom Chair James Catacchio.

2: Introductions and Purpose of Joint Meeting: Chair Dahlberg introduced Mr. Catacchio, who introduced Carlisle FinCom members. Chair Dahlberg and Mr. Catacchio expressed their Committees' desires to work more closely on the regional high school budget guideline.

3: Finance Committee's FY26 Budget Process / Discuss Concord / Carlisle Regional High School District Response to the Finance Committee FY26 Guideline Information Request Letter: Dr. Hunter and Mr. Conry began their presentation on the high school's FY26 draft budget and projections. Mr. Conry reviewed the high school's preliminary five-year projections which show FY26 expenditures of \$45.2M, which is a 3.4% overall increase from FY25 including debt service (or a 4.2% increase excluding debt service). He also discussed fund sources including circuit breaker, declining debt service balance, retirement and OPEB funding levels (fully funded in FY29 and FY30, respectively), health insurance obligations, pressures for immediate spending, and enrollment projections. He noted that there will be little to no changes in the two towns' relative assessments.

Members from both FinComs asked about new facilities and capital needs, an amenities building, track, Memorial Field turf, HVAC replacements, OPEB funding delay strategy, special education programs, and per-pupil spending levels.

Finance Committee's FY26 Budget Process / Discussion: Joint Concord / Carlisle guideline for CCHS for FY26: Chair Dahlberg opened the floor for comments on the practicality of a joint budget guideline for Concord and Carlisle. Carlisle members explained their budget process and timeline, and Concord members explained ours. Ms. Lis noted that about half of the Town's spending and nearly all of the Schools' spending is subject to guidelines. She described the use

of three metrics proposed for FY26: 1.37% (projected real personal income growth per capita, without inflation), 3.22% (projected inflation relevant to Concord's town and school expenses, blended 80/20) and 3.36% (projected nominal personal income growth per capita, with projected inflation), which will inform Concord's preliminary guideline formation. Concord and Carlisle members also noted that Concord's guideline does not include debt, though Carlisle's guideline does. The FinCom members of the two towns discussed the merits of excluding debt spending from the high school guideline, and the sense of both FinComs was an agreement to that approach in setting the high school guideline. Chair Dahlberg suggested he and Mr. Catacchio develop a roadmap schedule for the two towns, with Carlisle giving input on Concord's preliminary high school guideline before Concord finalizes the high school guideline in December. Mr. Catacchio noted that Carlisle's mid-May Town Meeting (with its vote on the high school budget) will occur before Concord's June 2 Town Meeting in 2025. The sense of the two FinCom groups was to proceed in collaborating to issue one guideline from both towns for the high school for FY26.

4: Recap of Action Items/Adjournment: Chair Dahlberg will work on a draft roadmap with Carlisle's FinCom chair. The next FinCom meeting is November 7, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. Chair Dahlberg adjourned the Concord FinCom meeting at 8:45 p.m. Chair Catacchio adjourned the Carlisle FinCom meeting at 8:45 p.m.

YouTube: Ctrl+Click to follow link: [October 24, 2024 Joint Carlisle – Concord FinCom meeting video](#)

Meeting Documents Link to October 24, 2024 FinCom Packet: [October 24, 2024 Joint Carlisle – Concord Meeting Packet](#)

Respectfully submitted, Don Kupka, Finance Committee Clerk, and Karlen Reed, Finance Committee Vice Clerk

**Town of Concord
Minutes of the November 7, 2024
Finance Committee Meeting
Hybrid Meeting**

Members Present: Eric Dahlberg, John Garofalo, Pat Geyer (on-line), Greg Guarriello, Don Kupka, Dee Ortner, Karlen Reed, Quazi Sadruzzaman, Sri Tupil, Lois Wasoff.

Members Absent: Suresh Bhatia, Peggy Briggs, Kathy Cuocolo, Lyndsey Lis, Paul Rodriguez

Others Attending: Anthony Ansaldi (CFO), Kerri Lafleur, Town Manager; Mary Hartman (Select Board); Mike Lawson (Economic Vitality Committee chair), Mimi Graney (Economic Vitality Manager); Sven Weber (Public Works Commission chair), and members of the public.

1: Call to Order of the Finance Committee Meeting at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Eric Dahlberg.

2: Public Comment: None.

3: Correspondence: Chair Dahlberg took this item out of the agenda order to address some emails and comments received from Mr. Miguel Echavarri, who owns a house at 255 Commonwealth Ave, regarding his concerns about the Town budget and budget process. Ms. Lafleur read a prepared statement that was distributed to the committee members addressing the matter, including how the Town’s budget is approved, the use of cost centers and expense codes, the uses of the General Ledger Book and the Budget Book, specific department budgeting approaches for police and human resources, and the plans for the FY25 and FY26 Budget Books using the ClearGov software platform. Afterward, Chair Dahlberg noted that he and Ms. Reed would review the information and see what further actions should be taken that would be within the scope of the Committee’s charge.

4: Economic Vitality Committee Update: Mr. Lawson presented an outline of the Economic Vitality Committee’s (EVC) charge and efforts towards increasing Town revenue generation and recruitment and retention of the Concord business community. These efforts include advocacy regarding the MCI Concord and 2229 Main Street properties, parking regulations, sewer connection fees, tourism, arts, and payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs). Committee members inquired about the EVC’s discussions about the Peabody School disposition, challenges of small business churn, congested parking areas, and intracity transportation needs. The Town will hold an economic public forum on January 22, 2025, and Mr. Lawson encouraged the Finance Committee to submit data. Chair Dahlberg noted an action item to follow-up with Mr. Lawson to understand what data may be helpful.

5: Finance Committee’s FY26 Budget Process / Town’s Response: Mr. Ansaldi and Ms. Lafleur presented the Town’s response to the Committee’s data request, which is contained in the Committee packet. Mr. Ansaldi highlighted the five-year revenue forecast for property taxes, state aid, local receipts, and other financing sources. He noted that new growth for FY25 was certified at \$1.2M and estimated \$1M additional growth each following year; state aid is

estimated to have a 2.5% growth factor. Mr. Ansaldi covered the 5-year forecast of Town and Schools expenditures, which he estimated will grow 4% per year (stressing that this is a rough estimate), and he reviewed the free cash totals for several past years (FY24 certified free cash was \$9.8M). Mr. Ansaldi mentioned the potential need for a Town Meeting override in the near future. Ms. Lafleur spoke about the impact of the NOVO and Thoreau developments on the new growth estimates. Mr. Ansaldi explained a chart showing \$389M in proposed Town capital improvement requests for the next ten years – this estimate includes Town requests that would be funded through the enterprise accounts. He described the five-year excluded debt estimates for enhanced road improvements and new public safety and public works facilities, which could peak in FY28. Ms. Lafleur explained the OPEB (other post-employment benefits / retiree health insurance costs) and Concord Retirement pension liability obligations, which are currently expected to be fully funded in FY32 (OPEB) and FY31 (Retirement), and Concord’s comparison to other towns’ efforts and Moody ratings.

Committee members questioned several of the assumptions, including the revenue generation potential of the new PILOT program, the estimated 4% annual increase in Town and School expenses, the Town’s approach to OPEB funding, debt service, jet fuel tax, and the excess levy capacity. Members would like to hold further discussions on a “best practice” or policy approach to free cash levels and whether 3-4% is a reasonable target to retain in unused levy capacity (FY26 estimate for unused levy capacity is \$3.7M) to maintain our bond rating. Members also expressed concern about the Town’s FY28 budget forecast because Town estimated expenses are expected to exceed estimated revenues, thus triggering the need for a Town Meeting Override. Chair Dahlberg reminded the attendees that the Committee’s guideline strives to avoid the need for a Town override vote. He also observed that the level of free cash is an input to our Town bond rating.

Committee members asked Mr. Ansaldi to present a FY26-FY30 budget forecast that is based on retaining the current 3.3% level of unused levy capacity, rather than being based on an assumed 4% annual increase in Town and School expenses. Committee members also asked Mr. Ansaldi to break down the ten-year \$389M capital improvement program into a year-by-year summary. Mr. Ansaldi encouraged the Committee to establish a capital improvement stabilization fund using free cash. Members expressed a desire to use some of the Town budget information in the Finance Committee’s annual report to Town Meeting.

6: Finance Committee’s FY26 Budget Process / Follow-up on Minuteman, Concord Public Schools, and Concord/Carlisle Regional High School District Responses: Chair Dahlberg noted that Minuteman has not yet provided the Committee with Minuteman’s capital plan. Committee members questioned the accuracy of the School’s estimate on stormwater fees; Mr. Weber corroborated the rough estimate and provided a brief overview of the Public Works Commission’s progress on setting the stormwater fee structure.

7. Finance Committee’s FY26 Guidelines / Tax Impact: Mr. Sadruzzaman presented a series of spreadsheets prepared with Ms. Lis and Mr. Ansaldi on the implications of various FY26 budget guideline scenarios on the excess levy capacity. The data sheets show that the Town’s requested FY26 operating budget subject to guidelines is roughly \$34M, the Concord Public Schools’ requested budget is \$47M, and the regional high school’s requested budget is \$24M, bringing the total FY26 requested budget subject to guidelines at roughly \$106M. These budgets exclude capital expenditures, except for the regional high school budget.

The data sheets report that the Town seeks a 3.90% increase, Concord Public Schools seeks a 2.92% increase, and the regional high school seeks a 4.42% increase, for a total Town and Schools aggregate guideline request of a 3.57% increase (\$3.6M). The spreadsheets show that a 3.57% increase in guideline spending would lower our excess levy capacity from its current FY26 projected level of 3.3% (\$3.7M) level to 2.3% (\$2.6M). Mr. Sadruzzaman and Mr. Kupka noted that the spreadsheets show that every \$100,000 we spend in property taxes beyond what the Town brings in, brings us ten basis points closer to a zero levy capacity. Chair Dahlberg observed that, if we were to keep the unused levy capacity constant at 3.3%, the aggregate Town and Schools guideline spending would have to be held at a level of 2.44%.

The spreadsheets listed the Committee's FY26 metrics for guideline spending, adopted at our August 19 meeting: 1.37% for real personal income growth per capita, 3.22% level services cost growth, and 3.36% nominal personal income growth per capita. Ms. Geyer noted that the Social Security cost of living increase for 2025 is 2.5%. These data will lay a foundation for the November 21 meeting discussion on a preliminary guideline and prompted Committee questions about the merits of a unified operating budget between Town and Schools.

8. Finance Committee's FY26 Guidelines / Roadmap for joint Concord/Carlisle Guideline for CCRSD for FY26: Chair Dahlberg presented a draft roadmap containing a timeline that would allow the Carlisle Finance Committee to comment on the preliminary Concord budget guideline for the high school prior to December 19, when the Concord FinCom will set the final budget guideline. The sense of the Committee was to support this approach.

9: Recap of Action Items/Adjournment: Chair Dahlberg and Ms. Reed will review the correspondence and response regarding the town budget query. Chair Dahlberg will also update the meeting schedule with Mr. Ansaldi. Mr. Ansaldi will prepare a summary budget modeled on holding the unused levy capacity at its current percentage level. Mr. Sadruzzaman and Ms. Lis will present the preliminary guidelines scenarios at the next meeting. The Committee may consider a policy for unused levy capacity. The next FinCom meetings are November 18, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. (joint meeting on capital requests with Select Board and School Committee); November 21, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. (vote on preliminary guideline); December 16, 6:00 p.m. (joint meeting on capital requests with Select Board and School Committee); and December 19, 6:30 p.m. (vote on final guideline). Chair Dahlberg adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

YouTube: Ctrl+Click to follow link: [November 7, 2024 FinCom meeting video](#)

Meeting Documents Link to November 7, 2024 FinCom Packet: [November 7, 2024 Meeting Packet](#)

Respectfully submitted, Don Kupka, Finance Committee Clerk, and Karlen Reed, Finance Committee Vice Clerk